

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND THE BRITISH CHINESE
COMMUNITY: RADICALIZATION OF A TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis bridges the bottom-up and top-down approaches favour of transnational history from the middle to understand the influence of the Leftist Riots and China's Cultural Revolution provoked unrest in Britain's Chinatowns in 1967. Concerned by the outburst of solidarity, the Hong Kong government sent Administrative Officer David (Kar-wah) Lai to survey why Britain's ethnic Chinese community—often considered apolitical—demonstrated in support of the Hong Kong Leftists. Using recently released archival material from the National Archives, Hong Kong Public Records Office and the London Metropolitan Archives, this dissertation argues that, while the impetus for protest in Britain's Chinatowns was the 1967 Leftist Riots, there were several other underlying causes that help to explain why the ethnic Chinese population of Britain demonstrated in support of the Hong Kong Leftists. The Hong Kong government survey initially believed that the ethnic Chinese community's unrest was due to Maoist indoctrination by the Chinese Mission, its supporting pro-Beijing associations, and Leftist media. However, Lai's survey revealed that the members of the ethnic Chinese community who gravitated towards Maoism did so for pragmatic reasons, not because of any strongly held ideological conviction. This dissertation contends that the Hong Kong Chinese and Britain's ethnic Chinese who dabbled in left-wing politics were not true Communists or Maoists but were merely expressing their discontent with British colonial rule in Hong Kong and British society. Their lack of Communist conviction becomes increasingly clear by 1997 and the handover of Hong Kong to the PRC. By this time, Britain's ethnic Chinese were thriving financially and many questioned returning to the “motherland” and whether Hong Kong would be able to maintain autonomy or remain insulated from the challenges within the PRC. Emigrant Chinese in Britain have held a complex relationship with the phenomenon of both British and Chinese “colonialism.” By studying the history of Hong Kong emigrants in Britain, this thesis

contributes to the understanding of the decline of the British Empire and the rise of the PRC state, and how the emergence of a British Hong Kong and its diasporic citizens became central to the new Cold War Anglo-Chinese relationship.

DEDICATION

I dedicate the following dissertation to my family, Dr. Christina Han, Dr. Joshua Fogel, Dr. Stephen Brooke, and Dr. Joan Judge, for their patience, helpful guidance, and constant support throughout my tenure at York University.

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The dissertation research and writing processes have been literal and figurative journeys during which I experienced some of the most memorable encounters, made some amazing discoveries, and met truly inspirational and thought-provoking people who have influenced this work in innumerable ways. It has been every bit as rewarding as I had imagined when I set out to conduct archival research for this project in Hong Kong in 2018 and Britain in 2020. This project represents my five journey throughout the doctoral program with the Department of History at York University for which my article “Turning Over a New Leaf: The British Government, the Cultural Revolution, and the Ethnic Chinese Community in Britain, 1967-1968,” with the *British Journal of Chinese Studies* served as a basis for my research project.

Many wonderful people have helped me with both the research and thought-work for this dissertation, and it is an absolute pleasure for me to acknowledge them for their helpful guidance at various stages of the dissertation process. First and foremost, I am indebted to my professors. I may have quit long ago were it not for my devoted and always supportive doctoral adviser, Dr. Joshua Fogel, whose encouragement, patience, and selfless time and care were sometimes all that kept me at my desk day after day hard at work. My intellectual debt is to him and his scholarship, which inspired my interest in the influence the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots and the Cultural Revolution had upon those in the West. Dr. Fogel opened up a world of writing and speaking and conference opportunities to me, and I cannot express my profound gratitude enough. I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Stephen Brooke and Dr. Joan Judge who provided helpful guidance and wisdom throughout the writing process. Their tireless efforts and patience with my sometimes confusing and impenetrable prose made this project so much more refined and well rounded. I would also

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Between March 2019 and April 2020, hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong citizens took to the streets to protest proposed Hong Kong legislation that would allow suspected criminals to be extradited to China. On June 30, 2020, in the aftermath of the demonstrations, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China (PRC) enacted the National Security Law. The new law was designed to suppress the Hong Kong protests and make it easier to prosecute protesters for engaging in crimes of secession, subversion, terrorism, and/or collusion with foreign organizations. Under the legislation, any speech, verbal promotion, or intention to promote Hong Kong's secession from the PRC was considered a crime.¹ Many Hong Kong residents voiced their opposition to the new security law, calling it an attack on Hong Kong's unique civic, political and cultural identity, and a breach of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, which guaranteed autonomy for Hong Kong for 50 years.² The National Security Law combined with the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, led to the sudden end of the Hong Kong protests.

Britain was one of the first nations to protest the PRC's heavy-handedness in the former colony of Hong Kong. In May-June 2020 the British cabinet offered Hong Kong residents with British national (overseas) (BNO) status, and their dependents, to come live, study, and work in Britain. Within a year, there were more than 100,000 applications. By December 2022, 105,200 had arrived. The BNO immigration route was open to anyone born before 1 July 1997 to Hong Kong residents and their dependents who registered for BNO status prior to Hong Kong's

¹ Helen Regan, "China Passes Sweeping Hong Kong National Security Law," *CNN*, June 30, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/29/china/hong-kong-national-security-law-passed-intl-hnk/index.html> (accessed August 5, 2022).

² Greg Torode, "China's Security Law Upends Freewheeling Hong Kong's Legal Landscape," *Reuters*, July 1, 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-hongkong-security-legal/from-renditions-to-closed-door-trials-chinas-security-law-upends-hong-kong-legal-landscape-idUSKBN2425JJ> (accessed August 5, 2020).

handover from British to Chinese rule. Their arrival met with mixed reception from local Britons.³

Britain has long been an important centre of emigration for Hong Kong Chinese due to the city's former status as a crown colony of Britain. Following the Second World War, Hong Kong became a refugee haven for mainland Chinese who sought refuge from communist persecution and were attracted to Hong Kong's rapidly industrializing society. While many found employment in the newly established industries in Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, those from the New Territories who could not secure industrial work survived the postwar world by either growing vegetables or finding employment abroad. Britain, too, had been transformed by the Second World War. Britain's reconstruction and post-war growth demanded labour from subjects and citizens from across the Commonwealth. Those who arrived from Hong Kong quickly found a niche in the Chinese restaurant trade and promptly established a migration network with Hong Kong to employ Hong Kong Chinese seeking work. Much like today, the arrival of Hong Kong Chinese was met with a mixed reception. Many ethnic Chinese faced numerous forms of hardship and discrimination while living in British society. Nevertheless, a migration network was maintained between Britain's Chinatowns and Hong Kong, and those who emigrated kept up-to-date with events and political fluctuations in the colony and the PRC.

³ Miaojung Lin, Kari Soo Lindberg, and Lisa Pham, "Hong Kong Migrants Find the UK is a World Turned Upside-Down," *Bloomberg*, March 18, 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-03-18/moving-to-u-k-from-hong-kong-migrants-still-coming-to-terms-with-new-lives> (accessed August 5, 2022); and Karen Gilchrist, "Hong Kong is not Going to be Under the Rule of Law: More than 100,000 Apply for New Visa to Britain," *CNBC*, March 2, 2022. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/02/hong-kong-bno-visa-100000-apply-to-live-in-united-kingdom.html> (accessed March 2, 2022); Patrick Wintour, "Boris Johnson lays out Visa offer to Nearly 3M Hong Kong Citizens," *The Guardian*, June 3, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/03/britain-could-change-immigration-rules-for-hong-kong-citizens> (accessed August 5, 2022); and "Hong Kong: UK Makes Citizenship Offer to Residents," *BBC*, July 1, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-53246899> (accessed August 5, 2022); and Amy Hawkins and May James, "My Time in the UK has been a Disaster: Hongkongers Fear Deportation after Years Left in Limbo," *The Guardian*, May 12, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/may/12/my-time-in-uk-has-been-disaster-hongkongers-fear-deportation-after-years-left-in-limbo> (accessed June 3, 2023).

While Britain's ethnic Chinese community had been frequently stereotyped as apolitical and interested only in their financial success,⁴ with the outbreak of the Hong Kong Leftist Riots in 1967, some restaurant workers showed their support by protesting in British streets.

In the immediate post-war period, Britain's need for skilled labourers from the Commonwealth was met with a significant expansion of the Chinese population in Britain. The British Nationality Act of 1948 reaffirmed the rights of British citizenship to all those British subjects born in the colonies, including Hong Kong.⁵ By 1967, it was estimated by the Hong Kong government that the ethnic Chinese population living across Britain's major cities was roughly 50,000–65,000. Over 80 percent arrived directly from Hong Kong, with most employed in the restaurant business.⁶ Like many other ethnic minority communities, the ethnic Chinese in Britain experienced discrimination by both the state and in everyday life, which worsened for ethnic Chinese in the 1960s when the government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962. This act removed the automatic right of citizenship for Commonwealth citizens and regulated the flow of migrants from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.⁷ The act had a significant impact on the Hong Kong Chinese who had lost the right of abode in Britain. Under the new law, they could only enter Britain with an employment voucher for a specific job obtained for them by their future employer. This resulted in the further concentration of ethnic Chinese labourers in the catering business through systems of chain migration, word of mouth, and family connections.⁸ Many of the ethnic Chinese

⁴ Gregor Benton, "Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong: An Early Exercise in Transnational Militancy and Manipulation, 1967-1969," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no.2 (2005), 331.

⁵ David Parker, *Through Different Eyes: The Cultural Identities of Young Chinese People in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 62-64.

⁶ Hong Kong Public Records Office (hereafter HKPRO), HAD 2/90/62: 15.

⁷ Home Office (of Great Britain), *Commonwealth Immigrants Acts 1962 and 1968: Control of Immigration Statistics 1969* (London: H.M.S.O., 1970), 3).

⁸ Parker, *Through Different Eyes*, 65-66

migrants in Britain did not intend to stay in Britain, but merely to work and raise enough funds for their families back home in Hong Kong. It should be noted that, unlike Britain's former colonies in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong had a large number of "stateless aliens," mostly people who arrived after 1949 from nearby Guangdong province that had sought refuge in the British colony.⁹ Thus, Britain's ethnic Chinese were not a homogeneous group and, therefore, this dissertation's use of the term ethnic Chinese refers to migrants from both Hong Kong and the Chinese refugees who fled mainland China to Hong Kong in the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War. Likewise, this dissertation uses the term Hong Kong Chinese to refer to the Chinese community of Hong Kong.

This thesis bridges the bottom-up and top-down approaches favour of transnational history from the middle to understand the influence of the Leftist Riots and China's Cultural Revolution provoked unrest in Britain's Chinatowns in 1967. Concerned by the outburst of solidarity, the Hong Kong government sent Administrative Officer David (Kar-wah) Lai to survey why Britain's ethnic Chinese community—who were often thought of as apolitical—demonstrated in support of the Hong Kong Leftists. Using recently released archival material from the National Archives, Hong Kong Public Records Office and the London Metropolitan Archives, this dissertation argues that, while the impetus for protest in Britain's Chinatowns was the 1967 Leftist Riots, there were several other underlying causes that help to explain why the ethnic Chinese population of Britain demonstrated in support of the Hong Kong Leftists. The Hong Kong government survey initially believed that the ethnic Chinese community's unrest was due to Maoist indoctrination by the Chinese Mission, its supporting pro-Beijing associations, and Leftist media. However, Lai's survey revealed that the members of the ethnic Chinese

⁹ Dalton Rawcliffe, "Turning Over a New Leaf," *British Journal of Chinese Studies* 11 (2021), 2.

community who gravitated towards Maoism did so for pragmatic reasons, not because of any strongly held ideological conviction. To quiet the unrest, the British and Hong Kong governments recruited the Heung Yee Kuk, a New Territories' grassroots organization, to organize a goodwill tour to Britain's ethnic Chinese community to help shore up support for the British authorities. From Lai's survey of the ethnic Chinese community, the British and colonial governments reformed and refashioned their relations with Britain's ethnic Chinese and gained their support by appearing to care for their needs and well-being in order to secure the continued flow of remittance. This dissertation contends that the Hong Kong Chinese and Britain's ethnic Chinese who dabbled in left-wing politics were not true Communists or Maoists but were merely expressing their discontent with British colonial rule in Hong Kong and British society. Their lack of Communist conviction becomes increasingly clear by 1997 and the handover of Hong Kong to the PRC. By this time, Britain's ethnic Chinese were thriving financially and many questioned returning to the "motherland" and whether Hong Kong would be able to maintain autonomy or remain insulated from the challenges within the PRC. Emigrant Chinese in Britain have held a complex relationship to the phenomenon of both British and Chinese "colonialism." By studying the history of Hong Kong emigrants in Britain, this thesis contributes to the understanding of the decline of the British Empire and the rise of the PRC state, and how the emergence of a British Hong Kong and its diasporic citizens became central to the new Cold War Anglo-Chinese relationship. Finally, this paper provides insight into how Hong Kong Chinese emigrants responded to the crisis in the colony and how Britain wrestled with its new identity as a multicultural society.

The first chapter deals with the initial reaction and response of the British and Hong Kong governments towards the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution and the 1967 Leftist Riots. A

Maoist movement in Hong Kong led to widespread demonstrations against the British authorities. The unrest in Hong Kong spread to Britain's ethnic Chinese community; certain members openly supported the Hong Kong Leftists. Concerned with how and why unrest from the colony had swayed and influenced segments of Britain's ethnic Chinese community, Hong Kong officials sent an agent to determine the causes and to report on solutions. With the outbreak of the riots in Hong Kong, the British and Hong Kong governments needed to shore up support from their migrant community to ensure the flow of remittance from Hong Kong Chinese emigrants to the New Territories and curb political instability among Britain's ethnic Chinese.

The second chapter examines one of the prime causes of the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns. Lai's 1967-1968 survey revealed that the poor relationship and indifference shown by the British and Hong Kong governments towards the ethnic Chinese was a chief cause for creating dissatisfaction with life in Britain. For years, the Hong Kong government stayed out of the affairs of the Hong Kong Chinese people and provided as little as possible to the colony's welfare. The British government rarely offered assistance and support to the ethnic Chinese community. A transnational link between the Chinese communities of Hong Kong and Britain had long been established and many Hong Kong Chinese migrants had first-hand experiences of the social disparity in the colony. As such, Lai's survey details how, by 1967, the neglect shown by the British and Hong Kong governments was a major factor that transplanted the unrest in Hong Kong to Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

The third chapter examines Lai's second major finding that Britain's ethnic Chinese community had greater access to Chinese language media that was either produced by the communist PRC or from Hong Kong Leftist's publishers than from British and/or pro-colonial

sources. PRC and Hong Kong Leftist media during the 1967 protests were well-funded and virtually unchallenged by the British authorities and pro-colonial newspapers. While communist propaganda played an important role in winning the “hearts and minds” of Hong Kong Chinese emigrants, an anticolonial emphasis on local news pointed out the many flaws of British rule. Britain’s ethnic Chinese did not have ready access to information surrounding the Cultural Revolution and 1967 Leftist Riots that provided alternative analyses to positive left-leaning perspectives.

The fourth chapter details Lai’s third contention that the poor socio-economic status of ethnic Chinese in British society was a contributing factor to their protests and dissent. This dissatisfaction was linked both to the experience of living in colonial Hong Kong and their treatment in Britain itself. In Britain, strict immigration laws challenged the continued financial success of the Chinese restaurant trade that depended upon migrant workers from the colony. Likewise, a lack of community leadership in Britain’s ethnic Chinese community provided no sense of belonging or forms of recreational and social activities amongst members. Throughout this period, ethnic Chinese frequently experienced xenophobia and hostility from local Britons. Finally, since many of Britain’s ethnic Chinese were Cantonese-speaking and monolingual, a language barrier prevented their integration into the British social fabric.

Hong Kong Historiography

Colonial Hong Kong

The history of early colonial Hong Kong reveals a long and conflictual relationship between the colonial government and Hong Kong’s inhabitants. The 1967 Leftist Riots and Maoist agitation in Britain’s Chinatowns were the result of British and Hong Kong governments’ persistent indifference towards the people of Hong Kong and their failure to introduce an

effective social welfare system. Authorities in early colonial Hong Kong lacked the political mechanisms to integrate the population and mediate social conflicts. This problem persisted well into the mid-twentieth century. However, this is not to give the impression that colonial rule was oppressive. It would also be an exaggeration to say that, before British rule, Hong Kong was a “barren rock with hardly a house upon it.”¹⁰ Still, colonialism, as John Carroll and Ackbar Abbas have argued, should be seen as the central theme framing Hong Kong politics in the modern era: “the history of Hong Kong, in terms that are relevant to what it has become today, has effectively been a history of colonialism.”¹¹ Equally important to understanding the politics of Hong Kong emigrants in Britain is contextualizing how a mid-nineteenth century transnational network established Hong Kong as a centre of Chinese migration and created a tradition of family remittances as a key economic driver in the region. Therefore, the governance, relationship, and structure between the colonial authorities and the inhabitants defines the colonial nature of Hong Kong in the twentieth century.¹²

The Canton (Guangzhou)-Hong Kong Strike-Boycott of 1925-1926 (*Shěng gǎngdà bàgōng*, 省港大罷工) (hereafter, strike boycott) was Hong Kong’s first significant confrontation pitting Chinese nationalism against British imperialism. The strike boycott revealed the Communist influence within the British colony. On 30 May 1925, Sikh police, under British command, opened fire on a crowd of Chinese demonstrating against British rule in the

¹⁰ John Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 1.

¹¹ Ibid., 1-7; John Carroll, *Elite of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 7; and Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong: The Culture of Disappearance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 2.

¹² Carl T. Smith, *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1985); Carl T. Smith, “Compradores of the Hongkong Bank,” in *Eastern Banking: Essays in the History of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation*, ed. Frank H.H. King (London: Athlone Press, 1983); Carl T. Smith, *Carl T. Smith Collection Carl T. Smith RASHKB Collection* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1995); and Henry J. Lethbridge, *Hong Kong: Stability and Change: A Collection of Essays* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1978).

International Settlement in Shanghai.¹³ A general strike was organized and supported by a united front based in Canton between the Kuomintang (KMT) and their partner, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The strike effectively ground to a halt all trade with Hong Kong between June 1925-October 1926. The strike boycott was the first mass mobilization and collective labour action that received mainland China's support. The strike revealed the CCP's influence on certain labour unions and the Party's ability to mobilize large-scale demonstrations. However, the strike boycott was spurred more by patriotism and anticolonial sentiment than interest in communism as a political project.¹⁴

While Ming K. Chan, Steve Tsang, and Chan Lau Kit-ching stress the political motivation behind the strike boycott,¹⁵ Carroll discusses how the strike derived part of its local support from genuine economic concerns and Hong Kong's Chinese's antipathy towards the privileged status of foreigners. These concerns figured prominently in the demands of the strike committee, which included calls for an eight-hour workday, abolition of child labour, freedom of speech and press, the right to organize, a vote for a Hong Kong Chinese member on the Legislative Council, and equality between Hong Kong Chinese and Europeans.¹⁶ Hence, to quell

¹³ Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 132-134; Gregor Benton, "The Comintern and Chinese overseas," in *Chinese Transnational Networks*, ed., Tan Chee-Beng (London: Routledge, 2007), 136-137; Fang Xiongpu 方雄普 and Xu Zhenli 许振礼, eds., *Hǎiwài qiáotuán xúnzōng* 海外僑團尋蹤 (*In Search of Overseas Chinese Associations*) (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao chubanshe, 1995), 2-3; Tie Zhuwei 鐵竹偉, *Liào Chéngzhì chuán* 廖承志轉 (*Biography of Liao Chengzhi*) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1998); and Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 100.

¹⁴ Ming K. Chan, "Hong Kong in Sino-British Conflict," in *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842-1992*, ed., Ming K. Chan (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994) 46-47; Steve Tsang, *The Modern History of Hong Kong* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 92-93; Daniel Kwan, *Marxist Intellectuals and the Chinese Labor Movement: A Study of Deng Zhongxia, 1894-1933* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 91; and Chan Lau Kit-ching, *From Nothing to Nothing: The Chinese Communist Movement and Hong Kong, 1921-1936* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 53-77.

¹⁵ Chan, "Hong Kong in Sino-British Conflict," 46-48; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 94; and Kit-ching, *From Nothing to Nothing*, 61-69.

¹⁶ Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 131-132; and Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present: Economy, Transnationalism, Identity* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 255.

unrest in the wake of the strike boycott, the British were forced to display their concern for improving the welfare of the impoverished Chinese masses. Post-strike colonial reforms included new child labour laws, improved lighting and hygiene, and an expansion of schools and hospitals.¹⁷ However, as the threat from the mainland receded, the sense of urgency for welfare reform ebbed among British and Hong Kong colonial leaders. By the middle of 1930, the colonial reform campaign petered out. The economic woes raised by the Great Depression and the fear of losing investor confidence in the colony further contributed to the abandonment of social and economic reform. The colonial government was fearful that if they improved Hong Kong's social welfare it would only encourage further immigration from China, which would, in turn, put additional strain on Hong Kong's limited housing and social services.¹⁸

During the strike boycott, the colonial government spread anti-communist propaganda through several newspapers, specifically, the *Kung Shung Yat Po* (*Commercial Press*, 工商日報) and the *Wah Kiu Yat Po* (*Overseas Chinese Daily News*, 華僑日報). Articles in both papers sought to calm the populace, undermine striker solidarity, and assure readers the strike would soon be over. Copies of these newspapers were distributed to the Hong Kong Chinese throughout the colony, to overseas Chinese in North America, Australia, and Southeast Asia, and to the European communities in Hong Kong and South China. English-language versions were even distributed in Britain. The editors of these newspapers maintained that the strike had nothing to do with Chinese nationalism and was Bolshevik inspired. They censored any news stories that were critical of imperialism or that were sympathetic to communism or socialism.¹⁹ Thus, by the

¹⁷ Philip Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China, and the Japanese Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 16-17; Tak-wing Ngo, "Industrial History and the Article of *Laissez-Faire* Colonialism," in *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule*, ed. Tak-wing Ngo (London: Routledge, 1999), 122-125; and Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 107-108.

¹⁸ Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong*, 17-22; and Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 107-109.

¹⁹ Carroll, *Edge of Empires*, 143-149.

end of the strike boycott, the British and Hong Kong governments had proven adept at using newspapers as a medium to distribute propaganda and were well aware of the importance of countering communist agitation by inundating residents and overseas Chinese with their anti-Red colonial viewpoint.

Postwar Hong Kong

Scholars often cite Hong Kong's postwar period as an adjustment from a war-time economy to a rapidly-industrialized peace-time economy. At the same time, Cold War politics and Britain's displacement as the world's premier power left colonial Hong Kong in a tenuous position.²⁰ In the immediate postwar period, Britain's weakness and continued Chinese nationalist agitation led to minor discussions in London to either vacate Hong Kong or to jointly rule the colony with the KMT.²¹ Despite granting independence to India and Pakistan in 1947, and Palestine and Burma in 1948, neither Britain's Labour nor Conservative governments were keen to relinquish Hong Kong. The retention of Hong Kong was seen as vital for Britain to maintain its status as a world power and to secure future economic interests in East Asia.²² Intensification of the Cold War and the growing Chinese communist threat were also factors that led to British determination to retain Hong Kong. Hong Kong acquired strategic importance for Britain during the Cold War. From 1948, Britain was fighting the communist insurgency in

²⁰ Chi-kwan Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War: Anglo-American Relations, 1949-1957* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004); Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 158-162; James T.H. Tang, "World War to Cold War: Hong Kong's Future and Anglo-Chinese Interactions, 1941-55," in *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842-1992*, ed., Ming K. Chan (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994); Peter Wesley-Smith, *Unequal Treaty 1898-1997: China, Great Britain, and Hong Kong's New Territories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Robert Boardman, *Britain and the People's Republic of China, 1949-74* (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1976).

²¹ Kwong Chi Man and Tsoi Yiu Lun, *Eastern Fortress: A Military History of Hong Kong, 1840-1970* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 250; and Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 149-152; and Tang, "World War to Cold War," 113.

²² Tang, "World War to Cold War," 113-114; Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 19; and Mark Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 16-17.

Malaya, a crucial economic colony, while the United States, Britain's chief ally, as the new leader of the capitalist world, viewed the strength of communism in Asia as a major threat.²³

By the end of 1948, the situation in China changed rapidly with the dramatic retreat of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime and the advancement of Mao Zedong's communist forces. The British government concluded that communist domination of the mainland was only a matter of time and therefore decided against abandoning diplomacy with the newly-established People's Republic of China (PRC).²⁴ Scholars agree that, unlike the United States, which took a firm ideological stance against the new Beijing government, British recognition was pragmatic and justified. Britain needed to protect what little British investments remained on the mainland, nurture a post-war re-development in Anglo-Chinese trade, and stay friendly with China to avoid problems for Hong Kong. Similarly, as scholars have noted, the PRC took an equally pragmatic approach to British relations as they needed access to Hong Kong for international trade. Hong Kong also served as a wedge between Britain and the United States vis-à-vis the PRC's policy in East Asia.²⁵

This does not mean that the relationship between PRC and the British and Hong Kong governments was cordial. The continued colonial status of Hong Kong was uncertain and precarious throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Postwar Hong Kong society was plagued by an influx of Chinese seeking refuge from the political strife of the PRC. Hong Kong was on

²³ Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 21-22

²⁴ James T.H. Tang, *Britain's Encounter with Revolutionary China, 1949-54* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1992), 49-52.

²⁵ Ibid., 168-169; Tang, "World War to Cold War," 118-121; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 152-157; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 135-144; Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong*, 316-318; Qiang Zhai, *The Dragon, the Lion, & the Eagle: Chinese-British-American Relations, 1949-1958* (Kent: The Kent University Press, 1994), 249-259; and Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 162-179; Young, "The Building Years," 131-133; and Cheuk Yin Wong, "The Communist-inspired Riots in Hong Kong, 1967: A Multi-Actors Approach" (Master's Thesis: University of Hong Kong, 2000), 70.

²⁵ Chun-hsi Wu, *Dollars, Dependents, and Dogma: Overseas Chinese Remittances to Communist China* (Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967), 84-89.

heightened alert under the continual fear, both real and imagined, of an imminent attack by the mainland. The concerns over a possible Chinese attack were intensified by regional warfare, including the Korean War (1950-1953), Indo-China conflicts, and the Taiwan Strait conflicts (1954-1955 and 1958). Thus, the British strategy, argue scholars, was a policy of accommodation and firmness without provocation and commitment to the maintenance of the law. This meant minimizing the Cold War effect and maintaining the status quo of Hong Kong.²⁶ Hong Kong, explains Christine Loh, adopted a strategy of quiet accommodation between the contesting and contradictory agendas of the PRC, Taiwan, and the United States, allowing the CCP, among others, to exist as an underground organization in the colony.²⁷ It is precisely Hong Kong's ongoing colonial status and the global dimensions of the Cold War that came to define postwar British Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's economy exploded in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Chinese Civil War. Trade grew fast, and the late 1940s saw the temporary restoration of Hong Kong's status as an entrepôt of China. Trade from the resale of raw materials and manufactured goods to the mainland rose from \$2,767 million HK in 1947 to \$7,503 million HK in 1950.²⁸ The almost tripling of trade was thwarted in 1950, however, when the United Nations (UN) and the United States enforced a total embargo on the PRC after the latter militarily intervened in the Korean War. As Carroll has noted, the American and UN embargoes ought to have sunk Hong Kong's postwar economy. Instead, the embargoes proved to be a boon as they forced Hong Kong to shift from entrepôt trade to manufacturing, accelerating its economic prosperity after the

²⁶ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 158-160; and Jing Jing Chang, *Screening Communities: Negotiating Narratives of Empire, Nation, and the Cold War in Hong Kong Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2019), 25-27.

²⁷ Christine Loh, *Underground Front: The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 12.

²⁸ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 162; and Theodore Geiger and Frances M. Geiger, *The Development and Progress of Hong Kong and Singapore* (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers, 1973), 68.

Second World War.²⁹ Hong Kong's industrial growth— primarily in light manufacturing, specifically textile and plastic goods—brought Shanghai industrialists and an influx of Chinese refugees to the British colony.³⁰

Hong Kong's economic growth in the postwar period did not coincide with any significant political and social reforms. The Hong Kong government and the business community believed that providing too much social welfare would only attract more refugees from the mainland. Gary Cheung reveals that Hong Kong's postwar youth were not beneficiaries of postwar growth; they received no compulsory education, faced high levels of unemployment, and were underhoused. Anthropologist Alan Smart pays special attention to the impact of Hong Kong's squatter problem on the colonial government's response to the housing crisis. Smart reveals that the colonial government was trying to resettle squatters for over a year before a massive fire on 24 December 1953 in Shek Kip Mei, Kowloon left fifty-eight thousand homeless. Smart proves that the government was motivated to begin resettlement because it feared civil disturbances following a spate of squatter fires and the severe health and safety risks associated with squatter sites.³¹ According to Carroll, the housing situation improved little in the ensuing years; by the 1960s, over thirty percent of the Hong Kong population lived in government housing in tiny, overcrowded apartments. Hong Kong remained well behind the rest

²⁹ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 143.

³⁰ John D. Young, "The Building Years: Maintaining a China-Hong Kong-Britain Equilibrium, 1950-71," in *Precarious Balance: Hong Kong Between China and Britain, 1842-1992*, ed., Ming K. Chan (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1994), 133; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 142-144; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 162-163; Young, "The Building Years," 131-133; and Geiger and Geiger, *The Development and Progress of Hong Kong and Singapore*, 69-70.

³¹ Gary Ka-wai Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed: The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 4-5; Alan Smart and Tai-lok Lui, "Learning from Civil Unrest: State/Society Relations in Hong Kong before and after the 1967 Disturbances," in *May Days in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967*, ed., Robert Bickers and Ray Yep (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 149-153; Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 146; and Alan Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth: Squatters, Fires, and Colonial Rule in Hong Kong, 1950-1963* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006).

of the industrialized world in creating a state social safety net. What welfare did exist was provided by religious and charitable organizations, such as the Catholic Maryknoll Sisters and CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Everywhere).³²

Politically, the postwar colonial government operated virtually the same as it had since 1843. Gregor Benton has argued that the Hong Kong government wielded almost absolute executive powers and lacked democratic political mechanisms to integrate its population and mediate social conflict. The authoritarian nature of the state caused many people, specifically those from the New Territories, to view the government as a distant menace.³³ Moreover, the colonial government's commitment to laissez-faire capitalism and the hidden hand of the market provided the ideological excuse to avoid policies that might improve the economic status of Hong Kong's poor and/or improve state social services. Thus, Hong Kong's political trajectory was one of depoliticization that stood in sharp contrast with the developmental model adopted in the postwar Third World and the Keynesian mixed economies of the West.³⁴ This lack of social and political reforms was a key reason why the Leftist Riots broke out in 1967.

The Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots

As the scholarship attests, the 1967 Leftist Riots represented a landmark in the history of Hong Kong and led to the emergence of a local identity distinct from the PRC mainland. Initially, the riots were triggered by an industrial dispute that escalated into violent clashes between the workers and the police. Subsequently, local leftists mobilized all pro-communist and PRC-owned businesses to participate in the riots against the Hong Kong government. There are

³² Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 144-147.

³³ Gregor Benton, "Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong: An Early Exercise in Transnational Militancy and Manipulation, 1967-1969," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no.2 (2005), 333; and Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 4-5.

³⁴ Smart and Lui, "Learning from Civil Unrest," 149-153; Ngo, "Industrial History and the Artifice of *Laissez-Faire* Colonialism"; and Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97*, 23.

two competing arguments on the causes of the Leftist Riots. The first insists that local leftists effectively mobilized the internal social contradictions and discontent among the Hong Kong people as the fodder for social change. The second—following contemporary beliefs held by the British and Hong Kong governments—regards the riots as externally provoked and an alien offshoot of the Cultural Revolution of the PRC that had little, if any, real support from Hong Kong citizens.³⁵

Jin Yaoru 金堯如, a local communist in charge of propaganda work in the 1960s, and Zhou Yi, former deputy chief editor of Hong Kong's leading leftist newspaper *Wen Wei Po* (文匯報, *Wenhui News*), were among the earliest to take the stand that the leading cause of the Leftist Riots was local conditions rather than external agitation. Specifically, Jin argues that the it was the local communist branch's desire to prove its loyalty to the radicals in the Central Cultural Revolution Group (*Zhōngyān Wéngé Xiǎozǔ*, 中央文革小组) that led to homegrown agitation and leadership.³⁶ Zhou provides a more nuanced analysis, suggesting that the 1967 Leftist Riots were the culmination of the unabated persecution of Hong Kong's leftist organizations and individuals since the aftermath of the 1956 Hong Kong Riot, a riot that had pitted pro-communist and pro-nationalist elements against each other. Zhou portrays the 1967 Leftist Riots as an explosion of anger fuelled by the persecution of communist sympathizers. For Zhou, the riots were an act of self-defence in the face of the colonial regime.³⁷

³⁵ Lawrence Cheuk-yin Wong, "The 1967 Riots: A Legitimacy Crisis?" in *May Days in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967*, ed., Robert Bickers and Ray Yep (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 37; Zhou Yi (Chau Yick) 周奕. *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ* 香港左派鬥爭史 (*History of Left-Wing Struggle in Hong Kong*). Hong Kong: Leeman Press, 2002; Jin Yaoru, 金堯如, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mìwén shílù* 中共香港政策秘聞實錄 (*Secrets and Facts of the Chinese Communist Party's Hong Kong Policy*) (Hong Kong: Tinyuan Press, 1998); Loh, *Underground Front*, 99-124; and Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 180-196.

³⁶ Jin, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mìwén shílù*, 113-140.

³⁷ Chau, *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ*, 3-10.

Tsang is among those who have argued that the riots were the product of foreign, CCP agitation. Tsang insists that the 1967 Leftist Riots were organized and directed by the Hong Kong and Macau Work Committee (*Gǎng'ào gōngzuò wěiyuánhui*, 港澳工作委員會), which was the local CCP branch that operated from the New China News Agency (NCNA), also known as Xinhua News Agency. The Work Committee, writes Tsang, felt it should capitalize on the initial San Po Kong labour strike as an opening skirmish that might lead to Hong Kong's own version of the Cultural Revolution. The Work Committee, suggests Tsang, sought to show their loyalty to Mao Zedong and instigated the riots to protect themselves from being portrayed as not sufficiently 'revolutionary.'³⁸ Building on Tsang's work, Loh argues that the CCP had a far more significant role in the 1967 Leftist Riots than other scholars have claimed. He provides evidence that the CCP offered direct material and financial support as well as vocal support to the Hong Kong leftists by promoting their cause through Chinese state media. Loh believes outside agitators overplayed their hand, and that the extreme actions taken during the riots eroded the sympathy of the Hong Kong people, which allowed the colonial administration to destroy Hong Kong's CCP establishment.³⁹

Striking a decidedly more balanced tone, recent scholarship suggests that both internal and external ideological forces played a role in leading, sustaining, and ending the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots. Drawing on extensive interviews, Gary Cheung offers a chronological account of the Leftist Riots. He explains why the riots took place and the responses of the Hong Kong, British, and Chinese governments, as well as from local Hong Kong Leftists and the wider public. Thus, Cheung provides fresh light on the agency of local leftists who saw an opportunity

³⁸ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 183-190.

³⁹ Loh, *Underground Front*, 99-122.

to mount a challenge to British colonial rule. Cheung argues that these same leftists were deeply invested in the ideological conflict between communism and imperialism and that these ideas informed the trajectory of the riots. Cheung labels the 1967 Leftist Riots as a watershed moment in the history of Hong Kong that informed a nascent local identity, kickstarted the Hong Kong government's social and political reform policies, and made Britain aware that Hong Kong would inevitably need to be ceded to the PRC by the 1997 lease-end date. Also striking a more balanced tone, Robert Bickers and Ray Yep's edited volume explains the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots through recently released material from the archives in Hong Kong and London. Bickers and Yep's essay collection provides an in-depth analysis of the thematic events that eventually led to the Hong Kong government's much-needed social and political reforms. The ten chapters offer new insights into the economic and political aspects of the 1967 Leftist Riots, policing and surveillance efforts, and the broader Cold War and Cultural Revolution contexts. The works of Cheung, Bickers, and Yep provide the most comprehensive accounts to date on the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots.⁴⁰ This dissertation will develop upon the existing literature by looking at how the 1967 Leftist Riots reverberated among Hong Kong emigrants who lived and worked in Britain's Chinatowns.

Maoism Historiography

Since the 1967 Leftist Riots were influenced by communist thought and practice, it is important to understand the ideas and practices behind the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (*Wénhuà Dàgéming*, 文化大革命), also known simply as the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). During the Cultural Revolution the PRC launched the Red Guards (*Hóng Wèibīng*, 紅衛兵), a

⁴⁰ Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*; Robert Bickers and Ray Yep, ed., *May Days in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009).

mass student-led paramilitary social movement. Under Chairman Mao Zedong, the Red Guards were guided to tear down the “Four Olds” of Chinese society: old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas were to be jettisoned in order to radically transform Chinese society. Officially, the goal of the Cultural Revolution was to preserve and re-invigorate Chinese communism. Mao believed revolution and class struggle were a continuous process that would eventually eliminate all bourgeois and revisionist elements from the PRC. Unofficially, the Cultural Revolution served for Mao to further his stranglehold on power and eliminate his rivals in the CCP. However, the overall impacts of the Cultural Revolution on China, among global leftist social movements and in regards to theories on the socialist state remain highly debated and contested within the historiography.⁴¹

Few would dispute the detrimental effect of the Cultural Revolution on Anglo-Chinese Cold War relations between Britain and the PRC, with Hong Kong acting as particular economic and ideological fulcrum point.⁴² Chi-kwan Mark describes the relationship between the two states before the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution as a continuous process of contestation and cooperation marked by diplomatic, ritual, propaganda, and symbolic gestures.⁴³ Prime Minister Harold Wilson (1964-1970 and 1974-1976) believed the Cultural Revolution threatened world

⁴¹ Maurice J. Meisner, *Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic* (New York: The Free Press, 1977); Mobo Gao, *The Battle for China's Past: Mao & the Cultural Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 2008); Gregor Benton and Chun Liu, eds., *Was Mao Really a Monster?: The Academic Response to Chang and Halliday's Mao, the Unknown Story* (London: Routledge, 2010); Lynn T. White III, *Policies of Chaos: The Organizational Causes of Violence in China's Cultural Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Frank Dikötter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History, 1962-1976* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2016); Daniel Leese, *Mao Cult: Rhetoric and Ritual in China's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2016); Guobin Yang, *The Red Guard Generation and Political Activism in China* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2017); and Pang Laikwan, *The Art of Cloning: Creative Production during China's Cultural Revolution* (London: Verso, 2017).

⁴² Young, “The Building Years”; Man and Lun, *Eastern Fortress*; Priscilla Roberts, “Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities,” in *Hong Kong in the Cold War*, ed., Priscilla Roberts and John M. Carroll (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016); and Ma Jisen 馬繼森, *Wàijiāo bù wéngé jìshí* 外交部文革紀實 (*The Cultural Revolution in the Foreign Ministry of China*) (Xianggang: Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 2003).

⁴³ Chi-kwan Mark, *The Everyday Cold War: Britain and China, 1950-1972* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 1-8.

security and destabilized Britain's remaining East and Southeast Asia colonies. Mark and Geraint Hughes note that Wilson long considered the PRC an unstable and dangerous obstacle to peace in Vietnam.⁴⁴ The Chinese responded to Wilson's overt anti-China statements by burning effigies of Wilson and United States President Lyndon Johnson (1963-1969); Western leaders were labelled as "running dogs of imperialism."⁴⁵ Interestingly, Cheung and Loh suggest that, in such a Cold War context, the Hong Kong government was less concerned with the threat of the Cultural Revolution than the increasing political attacks encountered from Chinese propaganda efforts by allowing American warships and personnel to use the colony for shore leave during the Vietnam War.

Mao Zedong Thought (*Máo Zédōng sīxiǎng*, 毛澤東思想), or Maoism, was the ideological force behind the Cultural Revolution. Maoism distinguished itself from the earlier Marxist ideology by adapting a nineteenth-century, European class-based theory of society to local Chinese conditions. Most famously, where Karl Marx identified the industrial proletariat as the revolutionary flagbearer, Maoism identified the peasantry as the revolutionary vanguard. It was the peasantry, promised Maoism, who would lead a socialist revolution through class struggle and guerilla warfare. Maoism quickly spilled beyond the borders of China and became influential in 1960s communist and anticolonial struggle across the globe. As such, much of the historiography seeks to contextualize a global Maoism through the prism of international relations, as a particular response to the limitations of the Bolshevik model of organization, or as a set of discrete strategies and tactics to propel socialist revolution. Some scholarship offers case-study analyses on specific Maoist parties and organizations, from their ideological formulations

⁴⁴ Ibid., 79-86; and Geraint Hughes, *Harold Wilson's Cold War: The Labour Government and East-West Politics, 1964-1970* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009), 164-167.

⁴⁵ Anthony Grey, *Hostage in Peking* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1970), 32-33.

and successes to their defeats and struggles for survival. Other recent scholarship examines Maoism from a transnational historical perspective in an attempt to explain how it transcended geography and culture to become a seismic, worldwide force.⁴⁶ Whether taking a micro or macro perspective, the most compelling scholarship on Maoism seeks to understand how external Maoist values, strategies, and tactics were transposed, adapted, and reinterpreted by particular historical agents under particular and localized conditions. The relationship between Maoism and Hong Kong emigrants residing at the heart of the British Empire in the 1960s is equally as dynamic and multidimensional.

The West and Maoism

The impact of Maoism in the West is frequently centred on its emergence and impact on the New Left in the 1960s. North American students increasingly identified with Maoism and the student-led Red Guards, as they demonstrated for civil rights and against the Vietnam war. Many left-wing rebels, radicals, and students viewed Mao as a hero, rather than a “red menace,” who stood up for minority rights, sexual freedom, gender equality, and against American foreign policy. Maoism was particularly influential on the New Left within France and the United States. In France, Maoist movements emerged from the split in the *Parti Communiste Français* (French Communist Party). Throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, multiple French Maoist parties emerged, especially following the student and labour strikes in May 1968. The Maoist groups received support from the French-educated elite, including such philosophers and writers as Louis Althusser, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault, and Simone de Beauvoir. These authors

⁴⁶ Orin Starn, “Maoism in the Andes: The Communist Party of Peru-Shining Path and the Refusal of History,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 27, no. 2 (1995): 399-421; Robert J. Alexander, *International Maoism in the Developing World* (Westport: Praeger, 1999); Robert J. Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World* (Westport: Praeger, 2001); and Thomas A. Marks, *Maoist People’s War in Post-Vietnam Asia* (Chiang Mai, White Locus, 2007), xv.

placed their own inflections on a particular French Maoism. Many French youth projected their innermost radical political hopes and fantasies on a not always accurate vision of Mao's China. Maoism allowed them to reconnect with the legacy of the French revolution but concomitantly rid themselves of their bourgeois attachments and the country's colonial baggage. However, for French Maoists, it became impossible to reconcile their pro-Maoist ideology with the emancipatory spirit of May 1968. Thus, the French Maoists transformed the concept of the Cultural Revolution to match that of France and instead sought to initiate a democratic revolution.⁴⁷

In the 1960s, Maoism became an important contributor to New Left political thought and practice in the United States. Numerous Maoist-inspired civil rights and anti-Vietnam war organizations emerged that advocated Mao Zedong Thought. Following the Sino-Soviet Split and the advent of the Cultural Revolution, the national Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) splintered into several Maoist and non-Maoist radical organizations. Furthermore, activist African American groups, such as the Black Panther Party (BPP) and the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), embraced Maoism as an ideology that stood against racial discrimination in American society.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ A. Belden Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism: Theory and Practice in France and the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1988); Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007); Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010); Catherine E. Clark, "When Paris was 'À L'Heure Chinoise' or Georges Pompidou in China and Jean Yanne's (1974) *Les Chinois À Paris*," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 37, no. 2 (2019): 56-81; Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (London: Verso, 2002)

⁴⁸ Bill V. Mullen, "By the Book: Quotations from Chairman Mao and the making of Afro-Asian Radicalism, 1966-1975," in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Mao Zedong, *Quotation from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1972); Robeson Taj Frazier, *The East is Black: Cold War China in the Black Radical Imagination* (Durham: Duke University, 2014); Aaron J. Leonard and Conor A. Gallagher, *Heavy Radicals: The FBI's Secret War on America's Maoists* (Winchester: John Hunt Publishing, Ltd., 2014); Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005) and Fabio Lanza, *The End of Concern: Maoist China, Activism, and Asian Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).

Interest in Maoist political thought among Western socialist movements ebbed in the mid-1970s following the death of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping's shift away from Mao's Cultural Revolution in embrace of economic reform.⁴⁹ That said, for over a decade Maoism provide to be a dynamic political philosophy adaptable to Western social movements' cultural, intellectual, national, and political interests. In many instances, the politics and reality of the Cultural Revolution in China itself was ignored by Mao's Western adherents, and Maoism itself became a trope of the political imaginary. They adapted Maoism as a strategy for seizing political power and as a means to advance progressive agendas surrounding sexuality, racial equality, gender roles, and human rights. However, Chinese emigrants in the West are conspicuously absent from both the historiography of global Maoism and within the actual New Left social movements. The New Left youths, intellectuals, and cultural celebrities who advocated Maoism were predominantly Caucasian. If Maoism became part of the radical intellectual ferment of the 1960s, how was its impact felt in Britain?

Britain Historiography

The British New Left was just as enamoured with the Maoism and the Cultural Revolution as their counterparts in France and the United States. The British Left promoted trade relations with the PRC to solve Britain's economic woes. They also expressed their solidarity

⁴⁹ Quinn Slobodian, "The Mao Bible in East and West Germany," in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Marco Gabbas, "Maoism, Political Violence and Terrorism in Italy," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2020); Dominique Kirchner Reill, "Partisan Legacies and Anti-Imperialist Ambitions: The Little Red Book in Italy and Yugoslavia," in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 186-197; Slobodian, "The Mao Bible in East and West Germany," 206-218; Hans Petter Sjøli, "Maoism in Norway: And how the AKP (M-L) made Norway more Norwegian," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 33, no.4 (2008); Perry Johansson, "Mao and the Swedish United Front against USA," in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, eds. Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Ian Milligan, *Rebel Youth: 1960s Labour Unrest, Young Workers, and New Leftists in English Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014); Miguel Cardina, "Territorializing Maoism: Dictatorship, War, and Anticolonialism in the Portuguese 'Long Sixties,'" *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 11, no. 2 (2017); and Drew Cottle and Angela Keys, "The Current of Maoism in the Australian Far Left," in *The Far Left in Australia since 1945*, eds., Jon Piccini, Evan Smith, and Matthew Worley (London: Routledge, 2018), 41-58

with the PRC and sympathized with a Maoist critique that stressed China's modern history of imperialism, foreign invasions, and natural calamities. The British historiography suggests that Maoism became fashionable in the late 1960s among members of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) who had become disillusioned by authoritarian rule within the Soviet Union and its recent military crackdown on the Hungarian Revolution.⁵⁰ But the British Left's solidarity with Chinese communists predates Stalin's death. As Tom Buchanan notes, the British Left ran 'The Hands off China' campaign in 1925-1927 to show their support for the Canton-Hong Strike-Boycott. British communists were familiar with Mao Zedong by the early 1930s. The British Left were influenced by the publication of *Red Star over China* and supported the humanitarian movement that emerged in the wake of the Japanese invasion in 1937.⁵¹ Amy Jane Barnes suggests that, unlike in the United States, the British government's pragmatic view of British-PRC relations, created space for the British populace to entertain a variety of connections to the PRC; the Soviet Union, not China was Britain's principal adversary at the height of the Cold War.⁵²

The historiography on British-based Maoist organizations suggests they came into their own following the 1963 Sino-Soviet split. While the CPGB stuck with Khrushchev, some individuals disassociated from the party and started Maoist-aligned organizations. Among the most important, note scholars such as Alexander and David Widgery, included Michael McCreery's Committee to Defeat Revisionism for Communist Unity (CDRCU) and Reg Birch's

⁵⁰ David Widgery, *The Left in Britain, 1956-68* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976); Evan Smith and Matthew Worley, eds., *Against the Grain: The British Far Left from 1956* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World*; Michael Kenny, *The First New Left: British Intellectuals After Stalin* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Limited, 1995); and Eric Shaw, *The Labour Party since 1945: Old Labour/New Labour* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

⁵¹ Tom Buchanan, *East Wind: China and the British Left, 1925-1976* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 22-45.

⁵² Amy Jane Barnes, *Museum Representations of Maoist China: From Cultural Revolution to Commie Kitsch* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 35-42.

Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) (CPB-ML). However, the scholarship of Widgery and others did not provide a comprehensive understanding of the Maoist organizations, their membership, or the impact Maoism had upon British society.⁵³ Recent scholarship, in contrast, provides a far more nuanced understanding of Britain's Maoist organizations and have noted that ideological tensions surrounding pro-Chinese 'anti-revisionism' caused significant splintering among British Maoists. Factionalism and declining membership quickly crippled the nascent movement. The hardline use of Maoist jargon, including calling on a student-peasant alliance and guerilla warfare, did not reflect the political realities within the United Kingdom and failed to resonate among the broader British Left. For these reasons, Maoism did not gain nearly the foothold in Britain as it did in the United States and France.⁵⁴ Most importantly, Maoist adherents in Britain were primarily Caucasian students. Any support for Maoism among Britain's ethnic minority groups is only briefly mentioned within the scholarship.⁵⁵

Outside of Maoism's toehold on Britain's student left, a handful of left intellectuals formed the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU) in 1965 to promote understanding and friendship between British and Chinese people. Members included scholars such as Joan Robinson and Joseph Needham who supported the Cultural Revolution's official goals. With the Vietnam War, SACU moved beyond the promotion of friendship and actively lobbied for Beijing's interest by distributing official PRC Cultural Revolution propaganda. As critics rightly pointed out, SACU had become a mouthpiece for the PRC. Historian Tom Buchanan convincingly demonstrates that the British Left often took a naïve view of the PRC and the

⁵³ Alexander, *Maoism in the Developed World*, 89-96; and Widgery, *The Left in Britain, 1956-1968*, 477-505.

⁵⁴ Buchanan, *East Wind*; Lawrence Parker, "Opposition in Slow Motion: The CPGB's 'Anti-Revisionists' in the 1960s and 1970s," in *Against the Grain: The British Far Left from 1956*, eds., Evan Smith and Matthew Worley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014); and Ian Birchall, "'Vicarious Pleasure'?: The British Far Left and the Third World, 1956-79," in *Against the Grain: The British Far Left from 1956*, eds., Evan Smith and Matthew Worley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

⁵⁵ Buchanan, *East Wind*, 199-204.

revolution. For the broader British public, Chairman Mao's ubiquitous caps, badges, Little Red Books, and other iconography was more a style than an ideology, one that would be famously mocked in The Beatles' song 'Revolution (1968).⁵⁶ Amy Jane Barnes' argues in her text on museum displays of Cultural Revolution art in Britain that Mao-era visual culture disrupts the distorted and exoticized impressions of China by the British Orientalist gaze. However, a notable absence in Barnes' work is an examination of the impression Cultural Revolution art had upon Britain's ethnic minorities, particularly those from the Third World and places where the Cultural Revolution and Maoism had a significant ideological influence.⁵⁷

Maoism in Britain throughout the 1960s and 1970s was a fragmented movement that often saw infighting over who was the true 'Marxist-Leninist.' Britain's Maoist groups remained small, unlike in the United States or France, especially compared to other radical groups such as the Trotskyists. Much like the United States and France, most self-proclaimed British Maoists were a part of the broader student counter-culture and anti-Vietnam movement. That said, unlike elsewhere, the Chinese Mission at Portland Place, London played a role in stirring up Maoist sentiments by providing support, access to material, and publicity to the British Maoist groups.⁵⁸

Just like the historiography of Maoism in other Western States, the British literature has paid little attention to ethnic groups such as Afro-Caribbean and South Asian interest in British Maoism. In particular, the scholarship has not investigated the extent to which there was any interest in Maoism among Britain's ethnic Chinese population. This dissertation will build upon the existing literature by detailing the influence of British Maoism and the role played by the

⁵⁶ Ibid., 179-199.

⁵⁷ Barnes, *Museum Representations*.

⁵⁸ Buchanan, *East Wind*, 192 and 195-196; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 249; and Muriel Seltman, *What's Left? What's Right: A Political Journey via North Korea and the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishing, 2010), 62

Chinese Mission in engaging Britain's ethnic Chinese at the time of the Cultural Revolution and the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots.

Postwar Britain was in a period of radical transformation and decline. Although Britain was victorious in the Second World War, the economic costs were enormous, with gold and currency reserves depleted. Massive loans were taken to avoid complete bankruptcy. Postwar British governments failed to re-invest in modernizing British industry. As a result, British economic growth slowed compared to nations such as France, West Germany, and the United States. Defence of Britain's Cold War allies and remaining colonies continued to tax British coffers; the defence budget far exceeded its annual GDP growth. Britain's economic woes culminated with Prime Minister Wilson's decision in 1967 to devalue the pound sterling withdraw most of the British forces from East of Suez.⁵⁹ Politically, the postwar period witnessed a succession of governments endorsing Keynesian economic ideas. Britain's welfare state grew, major British companies were nationalized, and there was popular support for trade unions and decolonization.⁶⁰ These economic and political changes were accompanied by liberalizing social reforms in fashion, sexual mores, abortion rights, and gender equality.⁶¹

In terms of this dissertation, one of the most significant factors in the postwar period was large-scale migration to Britain. Migration studies scholarship offers a critical analysis of racial discourse and the problems associated with integrating migrant groups into British society. Britain was a culturally and racially heterogenous society prior to 1945 due to centuries of

⁵⁹ Christopher R. Hill, *Peace and Power in Cold War Britain: Media, Movements and Democracy, c. 1945-68* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018); Hughes, *Harold Wilson's Cold War*; Bill Geiger, *Britain and the Economic Problem of the Cold War: The Political Economy and the Economic Impact of the British Defence Effort, 1945-1955* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)

⁶⁰ Shaw, *The Labour Party since 1956*; Widgery, *The Left in Britain, 1956-1968*; and Kenny, *The First New Left*.

⁶¹ Smith and Worley, eds., *Against the Grain*; Jodi Burkett, *Constructing Post-Imperial Britain: Britishness, 'Race' and the Radical Left in the 1960s* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Jim Smyth, *Cold War Culture: Intellectuals, the Media, and the Practice of History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016); and Kenneth O. Morgan, *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

substantial migration from Europe and the British Empire.⁶² However, in the wake of the Second World War, Britain accepted a large wave of immigrants from the Commonwealth, predominately from the West Indies and South Asia, who profoundly affected British identity. For one, the disintegration of the Empire and the arrival of Commonwealth immigrants, challenged conceptions of what it meant to be British and/or White. As Kathleen Paul has described, there was a tendency to redefine problems of race as a problem of immigration. By framing the issue as an immigration problem, suggests Paul, Britain sought to avoid responsibility for people who were part of the British Empire and the Commonwealth. Thus, those who were once British subjects were now considered outsiders and strangers. As Jodi Burkett has noted, “the long history of people in former colonies being part of the British Empire was simply erased.”⁶³ By 1961, it was common to hear people blame rising immigration for crime, and a variety of economic and social hardships. Increasingly, racist and xenophobic attitudes were used to justify immigration restrictions.⁶⁴ In 1962, the Government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, removing the automatic right of citizenship from Commonwealth nations and regulating the flow of migrants from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean.⁶⁵ This policy would have a crucial impact on the migration of ethnic Chinese, including those hailing from Hong Kong, one of the few remaining British colonies in Asia.

⁶² Ron Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain: Five Hundred Years of Black and Asian History* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); Laura Tabili, *Global Migrants, Local Culture: Natives and Newcomers in Provincial England, 1841-1939* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Anne Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews, and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields 1666-2000* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004); and Claire Dwyer and Caroline Bressey, eds., *New Geographies of Race and Racism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008).

⁶³ Kathleen Paul, “From Subjects to Immigrants: Black Britons and National Identity, 1948-1962,” in *The Right to Belong: Citizenship and National Identity in Britain, 1930-1960* edited by Richard Weight and Abigail Beach (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 231; and Burkett, *Constructing Post-Imperial Britain*, 6-7.

⁶⁴ Dennis Dean, “The Conservative Government and the 1961 Commonwealth Immigration Act: The Inside Story,” *Race & Class* 35, no.2 (1993), 61; Burkett, *Constructing Post-Imperial Britain*, 7; and Harry Goulbourne, *Race Relations in Britain since 1945* (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998); (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 50-55.

⁶⁵ Goulbourne, *Race Relations in Britain since 1945*, 52.

Chinese Migration to Britain

A variety of studies on Chinese migration to Britain focus on the social and economic integration of ethnic Chinese between the late-eighteenth and mid to late twentieth-century.⁶⁶ The first permanent Chinese settlement in Britain occurred following the recruitment of Chinese seafarers by the East India Company. Chinese seamen were recruited to replace British sailors throughout the French Revolutionary Wars (1791–1802) and the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815). Predominately Cantonese, these Chinese sailors settled in the port cities of London, Liverpool, and Cardiff. By 1880, the first Chinatowns were established in London's Limehouse Causeway and Liverpool's Pitt Street. At this time, the previous wave of Chinese sailors were joined by an increase in the migration of ethnic Chinese from the British colonies of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the ethnic Chinese community in Britain did not exceed much more than three thousand.⁶⁷ The ethnic Chinese population increased in the 1910s and 1920s as Britain recruited Chinese labourers throughout the First World War, but their total numbers declined in the 1930s to less than six thousand due to the Great Depression, restrictive immigration legislation, and assimilation.⁶⁸ As Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez suggest, on the eve of the Second World War, Britain's Chinatowns seemed destined for extinction. However, with the outbreak of war, Britain's Chinatowns were temporarily revived with the arrival of up to 20,000 Chinese seafarers. Most of these Chinese were recruits from east China, with many declaring Shanghai as their port of embarkation.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain*; Parker, *Through Different Eyes*; and Wai-ki E. Luk, *Chinatown in Britain: Diffusions and Concentrations of the British New Wave Chinese Immigration* (Youngstown: Cambria Press, 2008).

⁶⁷ Luk, *Chinatown in Britain*, 46-47.

⁶⁸ John Seed, "Limehouse Blues: Looking for 'Chinatown' in the London Docks, 1900-1940," *History Workshop Journal* 62 (2006): 65-66.

⁶⁹ Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present: Economy, Transnationalism, Identity* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 29; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 2.

In the immediate post-war period, Britain opened its doors to Chinese and other Commonwealth migrants to help meet its need for skilled labourers.⁷⁰ Since Limehouse had been destroyed during the Blitz, a new Chinatown emerged around Gerrard Street in London's West End. New Chinese migrants also settled in Liverpool, Manchester, and other parts of northwest England.⁷¹ Where previous waves of Chinese emigrants found work on the docks or in laundromats, those who arrived postwar, frequently established, or found work in, Chinese restaurants. The British demand for foreign foods caused the postwar restaurant boomed. The takeaway business provided a niche trade for ethnic Chinese who entered Britain with the dream of proprietorship.⁷² James L. Watson and David Parker have elaborated on why ethnic Chinese left Hong Kong and gravitated to the restaurant business in Britain. By the early 1950s, British Hong Kong was inundated by mainland refugees fleeing communist China. Many of these newcomers were skilled agriculturalists who competed with Hong Kong peasants over a finite amount of arable farmland. The urbanization of Hong Kong, the development of supply lines and infrastructure, and the importation of cheap rice led to economic stagnation for many families in the New Territories. Economic necessity and the opportunity for better job prospects motivated many ethnic Chinese to migrate to Britain. As Watson's research on the Man lineage in London reveals, postwar staff in Chinatown restaurants were almost exclusively male, and were part of a migration chain that was primarily based on village and familial connections.⁷³ Watson, Benton, and Gomez note that over a thousand Hong Kong-based Chinese migrants travelled to Britain in

⁷⁰ Parker, 62-63.

⁷¹ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain*, 30-31.

⁷² Ibid., 38; James L. Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage: The Mans in Hong Kong and London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 104-106; Kwee Choo Ng, *The Chinese in London* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 29; and Anthony Shang, *Chinese in Britain* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, 1984), 28.

⁷³ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*; James L. Watson, "The Chinese: Hong Kong Villagers in the British Catering Trade," in *Between Two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain*, ed., James L. Watson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977).

the first months of 1962 to ‘beat the ban’ caused by the Commonwealth Act. In the long run, the 1962 Commonwealth Act actually encouraged migration from Hong Kong rather than curtailing it and reinforced lineage chains and Chinese concentration in the catering niche by introducing a voucher system that made migrants dependent on the patronage of established Chinese restaurant owners, who were required to apply for vouchers on behalf of prospective employees.⁷⁴ As a consequence of the voucher system, migrant employees were entirely at the mercy of their employers as their residency depending on their employers good will. Nonetheless, by 1965, Chinese restaurant wages were on the rise, and workers, especially those fluent in English and skilled in the trade, were able to negotiate better work conditions.⁷⁵

Scholars have revealed that many Hong Kong Chinese migrants were sojourners who did not intend to stay in Britain. The wages they drew were sent to support their families in Hong Kong. Indeed, many villages in the New Territories depended on family remittances for survival. It should be noted that Hong Kong had many “stateless aliens,” mostly refugees who arrived after 1949 from the nearby provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. Refugee diversity in Hong Kong was replicated in Britain. Britain’s ethnic Chinese were not homogeneous and consisted of Cantonese, Hakka, Punti, and Siyi. As Watson’s research reveals, very few ethnic Chinese migrants could speak English; less than ten percent could carry on a simple conversation with their customers. Cantonese was the default language spoken in Britain’s Chinatowns. While there have been important studies on the demographics of Chinese migration to Britain, few have examined how these migrant communities engaged with Cold War dynamics and China’s Cultural Revolution.

⁷⁴ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 77-78; and Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 117-118.

⁷⁵ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 119; and Ng, *The Chinese in London*.

The historiography of Britain's ethnic Chinese community does describe the persistence of racism migrants encountered over the last two centuries. John Seed details the many issues and stereotypes ethnic Chinese faced from the late Victorian period to the Second World War. The establishment of Britain's first Chinatown in Limehouse, London, in the 1880s coincided with antipathy and anxiety towards the so-called "Yellow Peril." British media advanced the stereotype that Chinese were corrupt people whose seduced young white women, smoked opium, and gambled. The immense popularity of Sax Rohmer's novel *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu* (1913), set in a fictionalized Limehouse, along with the subsequent film adaptations throughout the twentieth century, did much to promulgate and keep alive Chinese stereotypes. Seed also reveals that the reliance on Chinese migrants as cheap labourers contributed to xenophobia among Britain's white working class well into the twentieth century. Fears that the Chinese would be used to outsource the British worker, especially as veterans returned from the Great War, provoked several trade union-led anti-Chinese riots in London, Cardiff, and Liverpool.⁷⁶

Ethnic Chinese faced heightened discrimination once again towards the end of the Second World War. As Benton and Gomez, and Maria Lin Wong reveal, despite the wartime service of Chinese seafarers, by war's end their wages were slashed by the shipping companies, they were barred from longshore work, and many were rounded up and deported. It is estimated that Liverpool's ethnic Chinese population was reduced by over a thousand to a mere four hundred by the late 1940s.⁷⁷ Scholars have shown that "Yellow Peril" stereotypes and fears of economic competition and miscegenation animated racism towards Chinese migrants well into

⁷⁶ Seed, "Limehouse Blues."

⁷⁷ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 29-31; Maria Lin Wong, *Chinese Liverpoolians: History of the Chinese Community in Liverpool* (Birkenhead: Liver Press, 1989).

the 1970s. The persistence of a language barrier ensured the Chinese were among the least integrated group of migrants within British society.⁷⁸

What it meant to be British shifted post-World War One and as the British Empire disintegrated. Ethnic minorities took part in this transformation, but like the Chinese, their relationship to Britain was shaped by their own unique external political influences and internal discrimination by the host population. Burkett's work on Britain's Irish community chronicles their history of ethnic and religious discrimination. Burkett demonstrates how Irish activists and British students promoted the civil rights of Northern Irish Catholics through activist groups such as the Northern Irish Civil Rights (NICR) movement. Burkett convincingly demonstrates that the NICR destabilized assumptions about the centrality of English contributions to Britishness.⁷⁹ Sarah Glynn reveals the poverty and discrimination experienced by the Bangladeshi community who settled in large numbers in Britain in the postwar period. Like the Chinese, Bangladeshis found employment in the growing restaurant sector. Following the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, they were employed under work vouchers procured by their employers. Glynn reveals that Bangladeshi migrants in the 1960s used their workspaces to discuss nationalist and political issues, including the racial and religious discrimination they faced as Bangladeshi Muslims in Britain. Glynn demonstrates that the Bangladesh Liberation War (1971) led to a political mobilization of Britain's Bangladeshi community who formed regional and charitable

⁷⁸ Luk, *Chinatown in Britain*; Parker, *Through Different Eyes*; Ng, *The Chinese in London*; Lornita Yuen-Fan Wong, *Education of Chinese Children in Britain and the USA* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1992); Yuan Cheng, *Education and Class: Chinese in Britain and the US* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994); Parker, "Chinese People in Britain;" Suk-Tak Tam, "Representations of 'the Chinese' and 'Ethnicity' in British Racial Discourse," in *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas*, ed., Elizabeth Sinn (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998); and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 2 and 6-7.

⁷⁹ Burkett, *Constructing Post-Imperial Britain*.

organizations in support of Bangladesh. Unfortunately, they were quickly disappointed by the abrupt corruption and divisive politics of the newly founded state.⁸⁰

Benton's article (2005), later reproduced in Benton and Gomez's *The Chinese in Britain, 1800–Present: Economy, Transnationalism, Identity* (2008), elaborates on the transnational role and impact Maoism had upon Britain's ethnic Chinese community during and before the Cultural Revolution. Benton positions the 1967 Riots as the impetus for the radicalization of certain members of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Benton acknowledges that the legacy of the East River Column, the anti-Japanese Communist guerrillas who fought during the Second World War, persisted in post-war Hong Kong and among British's ethnic Chinese migrants. Likewise, Benton acknowledges that the discrimination and poverty faced in Britain made for fertile ground for pro-Red Guard sentiment among certain members of Britain's ethnic Chinese community.⁸¹ However, in light of newly available archival sources, Benton and Gomez's work needs to be critically approached and revised to further assess the effectiveness of Maoist propaganda upon the ethnic Chinese in Britain. Furthermore, unexamined archival material, provides further insight into the British and Hong Kong government's response to Red Guard agitation in Britain's ethnic Chinese community. This dissertation builds upon the transnational literature on Maoism and the Cultural Revolution and seeks to explain the transnational impact of the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots on ethnic Chinese in Britain.

Methodology

This study argues that the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots were the impetus for unrest in Britain's Chinatowns in the late 1960s. While the Leftist Riots sparked the unrest, they also

⁸⁰ Sarah Glynn, *Class, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Bengali East End: A Political History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

⁸¹ Benton, "Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong," 334-335.

tapped into localized elements, in particular, the frustration the ethnic Chinese held towards the British and Hong Kong governments for ignoring the welfare of their community and for upholding systemic inequalities. In 1967, fearing that Maoism had gained traction among certain members of Britain's ethnic Chinese community and worried about the loss of remittances back to Hong Kong, state authorities were ordered to survey the cause of the unrest in Britain's ethnic Chinese community and recommend solutions.

Tracing the processes whereby unrest and support for the Hong Kong Leftists took root amongst certain members of Britain's ethnic Chinese community in the late 1960s is a complicated task. This dissertation draws upon corroborating scholarship to demonstrate how transnational interactions and interplay between powerful actors and grassroots movements in shaping transnational processes "from the middle." In doing so, this dissertation respects the agency of Britain's ethnic Chinese, without losing sight of the external agents and structures that both influenced and circumscribed the ideas and actions of these same migrants. Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo coined the terms "transnationalism from below" and "transnationalism from above" to refer respectively to the cross-border grassroots migrant initiatives that are ideologically or causally related to political trends in their homelands, on the one hand, and on the other, the institutional actors' policies that influence the activities of migrant diasporas.⁸² An example of "transnationalism from below" would be the influence of hometown associations and kinship ties. Examples of "transnationalism from above" are the diplomatic activities of national governments' embassies and consulates. While at times these two typographies of transnationalism are distinguishable, this dissertation recognizes the

⁸² Luis Eduardo Guarnizo and Michael Peter Smith, "The Locations of Transnationalism," in *Transnationalism From Below*, eds. Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 1-8.

interactions and interplay between grassroots movements and powerful state actors in shaping transnational processes. As such, Britain's ethnic Chinese were influenced by transnationalism "from the middle."

The Chinese associations that formed in Britain were based in kinship ties. These associations provided welfare to the community and maintained hometown connections to Hong Kong. Until the aftermath of the 1967 Leftist Riots, pro-communist Chinese organizations and the Chinese Mission of Portland Place, London were left on their own to provide aid to migrants, receiving little support from either the British or Hong Kong governments. In addition to providing aid, Chinese associations, including the Chinese Mission, played an active role in distributing left-wing Hong Kong newspapers and Beijing propaganda. It was through this media that the events that transpired in the colony were relayed to Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

In response to the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns in 1967, the British tasked the Hong Kong government to survey why and how Maoism had taken root and to establish an anti-communist network among the ethnic Chinese community. To combat communist sympathies, the British and Hong Kong governments promised to provide greater social and economic supports to the ethnic Chinese community, increase their counterpropaganda campaign against the local CCP Hong Kong branch that operated out of the NCNA, the de facto Chinese embassy in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Leftist press such as *Wen Wei Po* 文匯報 and *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, and establish transnational home ties that perpetuated a capitalist-friendly Hong Kong identity.⁸³

⁸³ Gary Ka-wai Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed: The 1967 Riots* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 149-154; Loh, *Underground Front*, 101-102; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 254; and Rawcliffe, "Turning Over a New Leaf," 12.

Examining the interconnectivity of transnationalism from the middle is a means to transcend national boundaries and delve into the interactions between state and non-governmental agents. This transnational framework helps to explain why and how the Cultural Revolution and the 1967 Leftist Riots spread to Britain's ethnic Chinese community, as well as where unrest and sympathy for the Hong Kong Leftists emerged. Furthermore, transnational theory aids in understanding the British and Hong Kong government's response to pro-Red Guard sentiments within the ethnic Chinese community, and why 1967 forced them to change their approach to Britain's ethnic Chinese populace.

This dissertation relies on a combination of sources, including firsthand accounts from Britain's Chinese associations and official colonial reports from the British and Hong Kong governments acquired from the National Archives, Hong Kong Public Records Office, and the London Metropolitan Archives. As well this dissertation makes use of left and right-wing Hong Kong newspapers that were distributed throughout the late 1960s. These sources reveal the transnational nature of the 1967 Leftist Riots and the Cultural Revolution and how Britain's ethnic Chinese community and the British and Hong Kong governments were motivated by and responding to both localized and transnational conditions and relationships.

Transnational theory emerged in the 1990s as a means to examine the interrelationships among states and, in particular, to understand the role of transnational actors, including ethnicities and non-state organizations, on the spread of people, ideas, technologies, etc. across borders. Before the 1990s, the historical discipline largely confined itself to narratives that were national in scope or that centered the nation-state as the primary agent in all diplomatic and international relations. In 1993, Manuel Castells drew attention to the formulation of production "networks" that connect many different enterprises outside a single national border. Castells

emphasized the role new technologies have played in the rise of a transnational information society.⁸⁴ A year later, the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm drew attention to the role of multinational corporations in an increasingly transnational economy since the 1960s.⁸⁵ While Castells and Hobsbawm focused on corporate transnationalism, Linda Basch et al. (1993) centered migrants' fragmentary sense of "belonging." Basch et al. argue that transnationalism is a process in which immigrants forge and sustain multiple relationships through economic, familial, religious, and political ties.⁸⁶ More recent scholarship by Elisa Tsakiri and Moisès Esteban-Guitart, and Ignasi Vila explores the configuration of transnational identities for migrant communities who live between two cultural frameworks. In essence, a transnational communities' identity formation, whether single or multiple, is formed by the influence and connections migrants maintain or receive from their society of origin and their host society. These transnational identities can sometimes lead to contestation over cultural, ideological, or political allegiances.⁸⁷ Finally, transnational scholarship acknowledges that a variety of post-Second World War factors—from Cold War politics to decolonization and technological innovation—accelerated global migration and transnational politics.⁸⁸

Recent scholarship has teased out how transnational initiatives "from below" and "from above" intersect. Smith and Guarnizo, Alejandro Portes et al., Miriam Tedeschi et al., and Gregor Benton agree that grassroots initiatives by migrants can relate to similar movements by

⁸⁴ Manuel Castells, *The Information Age I: The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

⁸⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914-1991* (London: Abacus, 1994).

⁸⁶ Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton-Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁸⁷ Elisa Tsakiri, "Transnational Communities and Identity," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (2005); and Moisès Esteban-Guitart and Ignasi Vila, "The Voices of Newcomers. A Qualitative Analysis of the Construction of Transnational Identity," *Intervención Psicosocial* 24, no. 1 (2015).

⁸⁸ Steven Vertovec, *Transnationalism* (London: Routledge, 2009), 85-127; Guarnizo and Smith, "The Locations of Transnationalism," 11-15; and Akira Iriye, *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 20; and Iriye, "The Making of a Transnational World," 698-701.

their homeland counterparts and can intertwine with the national and international goals of an institutional actor. Movements by migrant communities might emerge from local conditions, but, once they attract the attention of the homeland, they can be reinscribed by homeland actors to test patriotism and/or ethnic loyalty. In other instances, diaspora political campaigns might arise in solidarity with specific events, actions, or parties back at home. As such, interactions between powerful institutions and grassroots movements have allowed for the global economic processes and increasing mobility of people and capital have transformed cities and contributed to the emergence of new forms of social and spatial inequalities. Finally, migrant social clubs and trade unions often look inward to address local social issues and outwards to global hometown affairs. In essence, seeing transnational actors from both below and above allows scholars to understand how diasporic actors are politically engaged at both ends of the migration process from the middle.⁸⁹

Adam McKeown, in his study of Chinese migrants in the United States between 1900 and 1936, accepts many tenets of transnational studies but he dismisses its narrow Cold War timeframe and questions whether it can adequately account for a more extended history of global migrant networks.⁹⁰ However, scholars such as Elizabeth Sinn, Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez, and Peter Hamilton have used transnational theory to reveal how the Chinese in North America, Europe, and Australia were transnationally organized since the late nineteenth

⁸⁹ Guarnizo and Smith, "The Locations of Transnationalism;" Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt, "Introduction: Pitfalls and Promise of an Emergent Field," *Ethnic and Racial Studies, Transnational Communities* 22, no. 2 (1999); Alejandro Portes, "Introduction: The Debates and Significance of Immigrant Transnationalism," *Global Networks* 1, no. 3 (2001); Miriam Tedeschi, Ekaterina Vorobeva, and Jussi S. Jauhiainen, "Transnationalism: Current Debates and New Perspectives," *GeoJournal* (2020); and Gregor Benton, "Chinese Transnationalism in Britain: A Longer History," *Identities* 10, no. 3 (2003).

⁹⁰ Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900-1936* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 10-11.

century.⁹¹ Recent transnational scholarship has also be careful to avoid homogenizing a diverse ethnic group. For instance, Benton and Gomez refuse a monolithic characterization of ethnic Chinese migration to Britain, who varied by ethnicity, dialect, origin, and class.⁹² Early ethnic Chinese migrants belonged to several different sub-ethnic groups, including the Hakkas, Hubeinese, and Siyinese. These groups were divided by ethnicity, language, and even their reasons for migrating. Intra-ethnic divisions were rife because of the diversity of Britain's ethnic Chinese populace. Diverse geographic and class origins prevented pan-ethnic Chinese association. This, however, did not stop CCP from seeking to unite Britain's ethnic Chinese under a shared ancestral ethnic identity and national pride in China's achievements under the new Communist regime. The political cultivation of pan-Chinese culture in Southeast Asia by early Republicans and by the Communists has been a subject of several studies, some written from a transnational perspective.⁹³ Yet, as revealed by Benton, the CCP played an active transnational role in cultivating support from Britain's ethnic Chinese populace both before and after the Second World War.⁹⁴ Finally, while Benton examines the Maoist agitation in Britain through a working-class transnational perspective,⁹⁵ this dissertation picks up on distinguishing features and debates among all classes of Britain's ethnic Chinese populace, and reveals the role Hong Kong, the Chinese Mission, and the British and Hong Kong governments had in creating and countering the unrest in Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

⁹¹ Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*; and Hamilton, "The Imperial and Transpacific Origins of Chinese Capitalism."

⁹² Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 18.

⁹³ Prasenjit Duara, "Nationalists among Transnationals: Overseas Chinese and the Idea of China, 1900-1911," in *Underground Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*, eds., Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini (London: Routledge, 1997).

⁹⁴ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*; and Benton, "Chinese Transnationalism in Britain".

⁹⁵ Benton, "Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong," 331-347; and Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*.

Transnational methodology grounds this specific study on ethnic Chinese in Britain in the 1960s by contextualizing their actions within transnational projects and networks that defined the Cold War era and that transcended Western and Eastern bloc states. Furthermore, a transnational methodology explains how the Cultural Revolution and the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots impacted states, non-state organizations, and individuals, shaping new identities within the larger context of the Cold War. By examining the impact and response to the 1967 Leftist Riots upon Britain's ethnic Chinese community through a transnational lens, this dissertation will build upon the existing historiography and further our understanding Britain's ethnic Chinese, and their relationship with Hong Kong and the 1967 Leftist Riots, the PRC and the Cultural Revolution, and the Cold War.

Chapter Two- The 1967 Leftist Riots and the Unrest in Britain's Chinatowns: A Survey

Britain's Chinese community is one of the oldest Chinese communities in Western Europe, dating as far back as the early nineteenth century. The vast majority of ethnic Chinese migrants who made Britain their home originated from the crown colony of Hong Kong. The ethnic Chinese community were usually stereotyped as apolitical, business and profit-orientated, and the least assimilable of ethnic minorities in Britain. Since the end of the Second World War, the British and Hong Kong governments largely left the ethnic Chinese community to fend for itself, satisfied by the flow of remittance from the migrants to the New Territories. This chapter will explore the root causes of the sudden interest by the British and Hong Kong governments in the well-being of Britain's ethnic Chinese community in 1967-1968. Concerned with local and transnational events, the colonial authorities were pressured by circumstances into surveying the causes of the ethnic Chinese dissent and offering new government social and economic services.

The first section of this chapter details how events within the People's Republic of China (PRC) and in the crown colony of Hong Kong in the late 1960s created unrest among Britain's ethnic Chinese population. In May 1966, Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution to renew Chinese Communism through continuous revolution. Millions of Chinese were persecuted during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, and its effects reverberated among both overseas Chinese and non-Chinese. In Britain, a small segment of the British New Left embraced Maoism and celebrated when pro-Communists in Hong Kong staged widespread demonstrations against colonial rule, in what has become known as the 1967 Riots. Britain's ethnic Chinese community echoed the 1967 riots with their own demonstrations in sympathy with the Hong Kong Leftists. British and Hong Kong officials' perception of the ethnic Chinese apoliticism was

shattered. The combination of threat abroad and at home forced them to reconsider their relationship with Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

The second section of this chapter will explore how, in the concluding months of the 1967 Leftist Riots, administrative officials in Hong Kong became concerned as to how and why certain members of the Britain's ethnic Chinese community were openly supporting Hong Kong Leftists. Concerned about quelling social unrest and ensuring the continued flow of remittance, Hong Kong government officials collaborated representatives of Heung Yee Kuk (hereafter the Kuk), a New Territories grassroots organization, to shore up the ethnic Chinese community support in favour of the Hong Kong government and the continuation of British colonial rule.

The final section will explore the decision to send Administrative Officer David Lai to survey and determine the underlying causes for some of Britain's ethnic Chinese community to show its support for Hong Kong's Leftists, and to recommend a list of reforms. It was from this survey, and subsequent reports, that the British and Hong Kong governments formulated a plan to combat Maoist influence and stave off local unrest by committing to welfare provisions for the ethnic Chinese populace. Therefore, this chapter reveals how unrest at the heart and periphery of the British Empire, forced the British and Hong Kong governments to re-evaluate their impression of, and approach to, the ethnic Chinese community.

Postwar Anglo-Chinese Relations and the Cultural Revolution

Throughout the 1950s, Anglo-Chinese relations have best been characterized as a "continuous process of contestation and cooperation."⁹⁶ Britain recognized the newly founded PRC in 1950 to maintain and develop trade with China and retain Hong Kong as a colony. However, negotiations ended abruptly with the advent of the Korean War (1950-1953).

⁹⁶ Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*, 5.

Negotiations would not resume until the Geneva Convention of 1954 when Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Premier Zhou Enlai 周恩来 agreed to exchange chargés d'affaires. Before this agreement, Britain and the PRC maintain recognition through representatives of Britain's legation in Beijing, established in 1861, and the PRC's state media agency, the NCNA in London, established in 1947. On 8 July 1954, Humphrey Trevelyan was recognized as chargé d'affaires by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On 3 November, Huan Xiang took up residence as chargé d'affaires at the old Chinese embassy building at 49 Portland Place.⁹⁷ Despite establishing diplomatic relations at the chargé level, Anglo-Chinese relations became increasingly strained due to a series of geopolitical events, including the 1956 Suez Crisis, Britain's entry into the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) (as a means to defend its remaining Asian colonies against Communist aggression) and, above all, Britain's refusal to sever all links with Taiwan or to recognize the PRC as the permanent, charter member to the United Nations.⁹⁸

In 1962, Xiong Xianghui 熊向暉, the famous Chinese communist spy who passed on sensitive information about the KMT to the CCP during the Chinese Civil War,⁹⁹ arrived in London as the new Chinese chargé (1962-1967). A month after he took his post, an opportunity to repair Anglo-Chinese relations and improve trade emerged when Frederick Erroll, president of the Board of Trade, informed Xiong that the British government wished to invite Lu Xuzhang 盧緒章, vice-minister of foreign trade, to visit Britain by the year's end. However, in October,

⁹⁷ The National Archives (hereafter TNA), FO 371/110385 Eden to Zhou, 21 June 1954; and TNA FO 371/110385, Eden to Trevelyan, 3 November 1954.

⁹⁸ Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*, 189; and Tang, *Britain's Encounter with Revolutionary China, 1949-54*, 76-81.

⁹⁹ Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 142-152.

border clashes escalated into a war between the PRC and India, souring British public opinion on pursuing improved Anglo-Chinese relations. Erroll informed Xiong that the British government had decided to postpone Lu's visit indefinitely. Xiong was furious and called a meeting with his fellow Mission staff members. He recommended to the PRC a reduction in Chinese trade as a retaliatory measure against the "British government's imperialist attitude." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs quickly dismissed the proposal, and Xiong was informed a year later by Zhou Enlai that he was responsible for maintaining the steady flow of trade through Hong Kong and to encourage favourable economic relations by exploiting differences in American and British foreign trade policy.¹⁰⁰

Xiong's response to Britain's slight, is illustrative of the suspicious state of mind of Chinese diplomats in the Western world. Imbued with Mao Zedong's staunch stance against peaceful coexistence, Chinese diplomats considered the leaders of capitalist nations as political enemies. Consequently, there was a well-justified suspicion that Chinese staff members were under intelligence surveillance once they left the Mission's premises. When British intelligence surveillance was officially practiced in 1967 it only further heightened Chinese diplomats' siege mentality.¹⁰¹ Hence, a perceived hostile environment, restrictive rules, and dull life in the diplomatic missions inevitably led to an overly adverse reaction to Britain's diplomatic slight. Therefore, it is unsurprising that most of the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved of Xiong's hardline call for trade sanctions, with only Zhou Enlai in opposition. No doubt, Xiong's hostile response to Britain's decision to postpone their invitation to Lu, was shared by Chinese

¹⁰⁰ Xiaohong Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors: The Rise of Diplomatic Professionalism since 1949* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 85-90 and 99-102.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 102.

Mission staff, who, in turn, responded to the police presence around Portland Place in the summer of 1967 in a confrontational manner.

Xiong's reaction also reflects the growing antagonism between the PRC and the Soviet Union over their different ideological and practical interpretations of Marxism-Leninism. The Sino-Soviet dispute began in the mid-1950s when Khrushchev, the new Soviet leader following Stalin's death, denounced the former Soviet dictator's cult of personality. Mao believed such a critique threatened his own position in China, and by the early 1960s, the intractable ideological differences provoked Mao and the CCP to label Khrushchev as a revisionist to Marxism-Leninism. Mao argued that, by following Khrushchev's direction, the Soviet Union would relapse into capitalism.¹⁰² The Sino-Soviet split not only marked the ideological competition between the PRC and the Soviet Union but also the beginning of Maoism's worldwide challenge to the Soviet hegemony over the leadership of the communist world.

Anglo-Chinese relations were further inflamed by the United States' entry and escalation of the war in Vietnam in 1964-1965. During the Vietnam War, Prime Minister Harold Wilson carefully struck a balance between maintaining the "Special Relationship" between the United States and Britain and averting a third world war. Although Wilson did not commit British troops to protect South Vietnam, he publicly supported the American war effort in Southeast Asia. He considered the PRC a dangerous obstacle to peace in Vietnam. Wilson's public display of support for the United States infuriated the Chinese. Beijing's intensified its propaganda attack on Britain and Hong Kong. Hong Kong was labelled as a base for American aggression against

¹⁰² Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Vietnam due to its hosting of visiting American service members and warships on shore leave from the Vietnam War.¹⁰³

During this same period, the PRC's People's Liberation Army was steadily radicalized under Lin Biao 林彪, Marshall of the Chinese armed forces, and enthusiastically portrayed as a model for Chinese society. *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*, more commonly known as the Little Red Book, was published in 1964 for ideological education within the Army's ranks.¹⁰⁴ A storm was gathering in the PRC, which broke in May 1966 when Mao and his supporters instigated the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

The Cultural Revolution was launched to renew Chinese communism. Mao believed that revolution and class struggle were a continuous process and that the Cultural Revolution would set in motion the changes needed to radically transform and renew China's culture, economy, social institutions, and values to rid the PRC of all bourgeois and revisionist elements. To many, the Cultural Revolution was a political movement of universal liberation. Initially, Mao did not appear to have had a clear plan, and even his friends and enemies were unclear as to what measures the Cultural Revolution would entail. Mao's call to purge revisionist and capitalist elements throughout Chinese society was, to many, especially the youth, an opportunity to speak out and criticize party leaders and awaken the masses to popular democratic principles.¹⁰⁵ Unofficially, the Cultural Revolution was a response to the disastrous economic and modernization campaign known as the Great Leap Forward (*dà yuèjìn*, 大躍進) (1958-1960),

¹⁰³ Geraint Hughes, *Harold Wilson's Cold War: The Labour Government and East-West Politics, 1964-1970* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009), 58-63; and Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*, 80-87.

¹⁰⁴ Buchanan, *East Wind*, 180; and Alexander C. Cook, "Introduction: The Spiritual Atom Bomb and its Global Fallout," in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2.

¹⁰⁵ Yiching Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins: Chinese Socialism in Crisis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 147.

which resulted in millions of deaths. The failure of the Great Leap Forward posed a challenge to Mao's leadership of the PRC; in fact, he was replaced as State Chairman by his rival Liu Shaoqi 劉少奇 (1959), who had been openly critical of Mao's economic policy. For Mao, the Cultural Revolution would empower him to reassert his authority over party rivals by mobilizing other forces in Chinese society, above all, the youth who formed the Red Guards.¹⁰⁶

Mao's "May 16 Notification" and a culture of revisionist purging helped set the stage for the Hong Kong riots. At a party conference in Beijing on 16 May 1966, Mao warned of revisionists within the party who sought to restore capitalism. The message sent a chill through the party ranks as many felt the only safe option was to trust and side with Chairman Mao. To consolidate his power, Mao set up a new office named the (Central) Cultural Revolution Group (*Zhōngyāng Wéngé Xiǎozǔ*, 中央文革小组) (CCRG) to help instigate and direct the Red Guards to attack the Four Olds of Chinese society: old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas. The "May 16 Notification" empowered Mao to label and oust any party rivals as revisionists.¹⁰⁷ The factionalism Mao's notification created within the party would have grave consequences for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, in turn, the PRC's representations in Hong Kong and Britain.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was founded on 8 November 1949 with Zhou Enlai holding the title of Premier and Foreign Minister (1949-1958). In the summer of 1966, Zhou, through the Foreign Ministry's Deputy Director Liao Chengzhi 廖承志, instructed Hong Kong communists that the Cultural Revolution would be confined to the PRC. Hong Kong communists

¹⁰⁶ Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Barnes, *Museum Representations of Maoist China*, 46-47.

were informed that they could still educate themselves in the principles of Maoism, but they should desist from any revolutionary actions to avoid damaging the CCP's diplomatic relationship with the colony. Liao repeated this message in October 1966 when Hong Kong communists visited Beijing to celebrate National Day.¹⁰⁸ Beginning in 1958, the position of Foreign Minister passed to Marshall Chen Yi 陈毅. Chen had been loyal to the CCP and Mao since 1923. He fought against the Japanese and the KMT to help form the PRC. He became known as someone who sought to moderate the Cultural Revolution. While Chen expressed his support for the Cultural Revolution, he did not agree with the Red Guard revolutionary tactics. When Mao called for the masses to identify and oust so-called capitalist revisionists, it did not take long for the Red Guards to investigate the party leadership within the Foreign Ministry. Chen attempted to prevent the Red Guards from interfering with Ministry staff and Chinese foreign policy by supporting Liu Shaoqi's use of work teams, which were meant to provide leadership and minimize extremism that might pose a threat to the Foreign Ministry.¹⁰⁹

In retrospect, Chen Yi was fighting a losing battle against the Red Guards. He defended the use of work teams to keep the Foreign Ministry safe from the chaos while opposing Chen Boda 陈伯达, one of the radical leaders of the CCRG.¹¹⁰ When Mao returned to Beijing on 18 July, he criticized the Foreign Ministry work teams for suppressing the Red Guards and took the side of the CCRG. Between late 1966 and 1967, Chen lost further credibility when the PRC began recalling ambassadors and senior embassy staff back to Beijing to receive re-education in

¹⁰⁸ Loh, *Underground Front*, 101.

¹⁰⁹ Melvin Gurtov, *The Foreign Ministry and Foreign Affairs in China's 'Cultural Revolution'* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1969), 5-7.

¹¹⁰ Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors*, 111.

the Cultural Revolution, including Xiong Xianghui 熊向暉.¹¹¹ With Mao's assent and patronage, the CCRG, comprising of Lin Biao, Chen Boda, Mao's wife Jiang Qing 江青, Kang Sheng 康生, Yao Wen Yuan 姚文元, Zhang Chunqiao 張春橋, Wang Li 王力, and Xie Fuzhi 謝富治 effectively replaced the Politburo and the Central Secretariat as the main body of decision-making, further isolating Chen Yi and Zhou Enlai from Mao's inner core. By November 1966, Chen's outspoken criticism of the Red Guards made him a target for both the Red Guards and the CCRG. On 24 January 1967 he was accused by his adversaries as being a bourgeois reactionary. The CCRG effectively orchestrated a "seizure of power" within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, contributing to the growth of "ultra-leftism" during the early years of the Cultural Revolution.¹¹²

At home, hundreds of thousands of Red Guards attended the receptions of Chairman Mao at Tiananmen Square. They followed instructions to "bombard the headquarters," "smash the four olds." They recited the Little Red Book in defiance of perceived enemies, including capitalist roaders, revisionists, and imperialists. Red Guards demonstrated their loyalty and commitment to Maoism by staging model operas (*yangban xi*, 樣板戲) and by displaying big character posters (*dàzì bào*, 大字報) denouncing class enemies. Eventually, the Red Guards directed their anger towards foreigners and foreign missions. Anything that could be interpreted as anti-Chinese by the Red Guards provoked a vicious cycle of assaults and reprisals towards foreigners. The Red Guards attacked Indonesian, Indian, and Burmese embassies. While Mao, Zhou, and the CCRG did not officially order these attacks, once they had occurred, they

¹¹¹ Gurtov, *The Foreign Ministry and Foreign Affairs in China's 'Cultural Revolution'*, 15.

¹¹² Ma, *Wàijiāo bù wéngé jìshí*; and Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998).

capitalized on them. The CCR leadership gave moral endorsement to Red Guards' outburst by stating that the efforts of the “revolutionary masses” could not be resisted.¹¹³

Between 1966 and 1967, the PRC alienated itself on the global stage; Mao's China entered into disputes with over thirty of the roughly fifty nations with whom it had full or semi-diplomatic relations. Chinese nationals living abroad who wanted to stay in Mao's good books went through contortions to prove that, despite living comfortable lives in bourgeois societies, they were just as red as their mainland compatriots. In the summer of 1966, an Austrian member of *Rote Fahne* (Red Flag), the predecessor to the Marxist-Leninist Party of Austria, wrote a letter to Mao criticizing the Chinese trade representatives in Vienna. He argued that the trade representatives had betrayed the working class by living a “luxurious” lifestyle, complete with expensive suits and Mercedes.¹¹⁴ On September 9, 1966, Mao ordered all overseas Chinese nationals to revolutionize the Chinese embassies abroad.¹¹⁵ The message was clear and remaining Chinese state agencies, such as the NCNA diplomatic offices, staff members pledged to revolutionize their activities in the struggle against capitalism, revisionism, and imperialism. The culture of suspicion and extremism caused by the implementation of the Cultural Revolution inspired not only the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots but also the burning of the British Mission in Beijing and the “Battle of Portland Place” in London that same year.

The Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots

¹¹³ Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cultural Revolution* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998), 62; Peter Van Ness, *Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 237; and MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 222-230.

¹¹⁴ Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors*, 116-117.

¹¹⁵ Mao Zedong 毛澤東, *Jiànguó yǐlái máozédōng wéngǎo* (Manuscripts of Mao Zedong Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China) Vo. 12 (Beijing: Zhongyang wen xian chubanshe, 1996), 128-129.

The PRC played a top-down role in provoking the Macau and Hong Kong leftist riots, and inspiring Red Guard sentiments in Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Cultural Revolution extremism threatened PRC diplomatic relations and accelerated Chinese migrant radicalism, especially in Portuguese Macau and British Hong Kong between 1966-1967. Because of the anti-imperial and anti-capitalist nature of the Cultural Revolution, it was only a matter of time before communists in British-ruled Hong Kong would mobilize against their colonial conditions.¹¹⁶ On the one hand, moderates within the CCP, such as Chen Yi, Liao Chengzhi, and Premier Zhou Enlai, sought to work with the British colony and maintain cordial relations to further Chinese economic and trade interests.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, CCRG radicals viewed the continued existence of British and Portuguese colonies on the PRC's doorstep as an unacceptable accommodation towards capitalism. In Macau, Portuguese authorities yielded to Leftist demands following the 3 December 1966 Macau Riot, also known as the 12-3 Incident. This event served as a warning to Britain and the PRC that similar events were likely to occur in Hong Kong. Official Chinese radio from Beijing accused Portuguese authorities of premeditated fascist atrocities for failing to grant Chinese communists' permission to build a private school on Taipa Island. Communist protesters rioted and Portuguese police and soldiers were unable to quell the demonstrations. Fearing the disintegration of the Macau colony, Nobre de Carvalho, Governor of Macau (1966-1974), agreed to the Leftists' list of demands, including an official apology, the expulsion of all KMT agents, and the handing over of seven KMT agents who had been imprisoned since 1963.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Wu, *The Cultural Revolution at the Margins*, 1-2.

¹¹⁷ Wong, "The Communist-inspired Riots in Hong Kong, 1967: A Multi-Actors Approach," 70.

¹¹⁸ Steve Shipp, *Macau, China: A Political History of the Portuguese Colony's Transition to Chinese Rule* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1997), 87-89.

Ho Yin 何賢 (1908-1983), a wealthy pro-communist businessman and Macau's unofficial liaison with the PRC, was the PRC's chief negotiator following the 12-3 Incident. However, Yin was also taking direction from Liang Weilin and Qi Feng, members of the Hong Kong-Macau Work Committee. According to Jin Yaoru, the editor-in-chief of the Leftist newspaper *Wen Wei Po* in 1966, both Liang and Qi were Red Guard enthusiasts.¹¹⁹ The Taipa Incident was the perfect opportunity for the Hong Kong-Macau Work Committee to show their commitment to the Cultural Revolution by casting the simple clash as a larger struggle against imperialism. What makes the 12-3 Incident so unique is that both Ho and the Hong Kong-Macau Work Committee needed CCP authorization to negotiate the terms to end the riots. It is unclear which department within the CCP directed Macau policy during the negotiations. After local Leftists presented their demands, the Foreign Affairs Office of Guangdong province submitted a fourth list of demands that included not only an official apology by the Portuguese government but also a promise to ensure that KMT agents no longer operated in Macau and to request the handover of seven known KMT spies to the PRC government. This demand ensured that the KMT could no longer use Macau as a forward base of operations. Furthermore, Beijing deployed the PLA along the Macau-Guangdong border to conduct military exercises. General Huang Yongsheng 黃永勝, Commander of the Guangzhou Military Region (1966-1971), sent the ten thousand-strong PLA force and four warships to protect Macau from any possible attack by Red Guards. He did so out of concern that some might cross the border to aid their patriotic compatriots in Macau. In response to the presence of the PLA, the Portuguese dismissed four

¹¹⁹ Jin, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mǐwén shìlù*, 113-140.

senior officers within the administration, banned and closed all pro-KMT businesses and unions, and shut down the British Consulate.¹²⁰

The Portuguese lost effective control of the colony when they agreed to the demands of the Macau Leftist demands. For the PRC, the 12-3 Incident was touted as a victory that proved the superiority of Mao Zedong Thought over imperialism. This victory reverberated for decades as it effectively ended KMT influence in Macau and gave rise to a network of pro-Beijing organizations who would ensure a smooth transfer of administrative sovereignty to the PRC in 1999.¹²¹ An agreement between Portugal and the PRC was more effective than complete annexation for it allowed for the continued economic development of Macau at the same time as it provided time for Chinese communist organizations and supporters of freedom to build up pro-Beijing sentiment among the people of Macau.¹²² It is important to note that both Liang Weilin and Qi Feng worked at China's NCNA Hong Kong headquarters, and the example of Macau provided a template for action in Hong Kong.¹²³ As will be shown, just like in Macau, local CCP agencies exerted a level of control to influence the Hong Kong riots and their aftermath. The Macau Leftist Riots had no direct impact on Britain and were largely ignored by Britain's ethnic Chinese community and the British Left; the same could not be said of the Hong Kong riots. However, the Macau Leftist Riots represent an early example of the geopolitical reverberations of the Cultural Revolution as it played out within a colonial capitalist society. The Macau Leftist Riots were a portend of the unrest the following year in Hong Kong and among ethnic Chinese in Britain.

¹²⁰ Agnes I. F. Lam and Cathryn H. Clayton, "One, Two, Three: Evaluating 'Macau's Cultural Revolution,'" *Modern China Studies* 23 no. 2 (2016): 176-179.

¹²¹ Lam and Clayton, "One, Two, Three: Evaluating 'Macau's Cultural Revolution,'" 183.

¹²² Shipp, *Macau, China*, 94.

¹²³ Loh, *Underground Front*, 103.

There were also premonitions of unrest in Hong Kong in early April 1966 as underprivileged youth and the underprivileged staged a series of protests against an increase in Star Ferry ticket fees.¹²⁴ But, interestingly, the PRC and the Hong Kong Leftist press did not capitalize on these riots, even though they were animated by social inequality. This may have been because the PRC was dealing with its own internal upheavals, including the ousting of “revisionist” Party leaders. News arrived in Hong Kong in May 1966 that Peng Zhen 彭真, one of China’s top cadres and the mayor of Beijing (1951-1966), had been dismissed.¹²⁵ By August, the Cultural Revolution movement had broken out in Beijing and spread nationwide. While Hong Kong officials were worried by these developments, life in the colony remained stable.

The British reacted slowly to the rapidly evolving geopolitical challenges of the Cultural Revolution. Intelligence from Britain’s Special Branch that indicated that the Hong Kong-Macau Work Committee’s had infiltrated Hong Kong’s Leftist union organizations elicited only mild alarm. Britain’s official public correspondence downplaying the situation was designed to assure public and investor confidence in the colony.¹²⁶ Prime Minister Wilson’s policy of maintaining Britain’s position of power in strategic and financial terms made him ill-inclined to sound the alarm. Thus, Parliament left matters in Hong Kong to drift without consideration or guidance. It was not until April 1967 that the British received the first hint of an impending crisis as labourers staged street demonstrations in Kowloon. Some of these labourers voiced anti-government opinions. Hoping to stave off a similar Macau incident, Jack Cater, who would later become Hong Kong’s Defence secretary was appointed alongside Denis Bray, Assistant Director of Urban Services, Michael Stevenson, Deputy Director of Information Services, and David Ford,

¹²⁴ Ibid., 104; and Cheung, *Hong Kong’s Watershed*, 13-15.

¹²⁵ Government of Hong Kong, *Kowloon Disturbances 1966 Report of Commission of Inquiry*, 146-147; Loh, *Underground Front*, 101; and Cheung, *Hong Kong’s Watershed*, 13-15.

¹²⁶ Gurtov, *The Foreign Ministry and Foreign Affairs in China’s ‘Cultural Revolution,’* 73-74.

Commando Brigade officer to form a team to restore peace and security.¹²⁷ That four men of strategic importance were named to this team, suggests the British government had finally decided to take the situation seriously. The Special Group met every morning to brief and advise Governor David Trench.¹²⁸ In the summer of 1967, Hong Kong's Legislative Council noted the work of the Cater-led team in informing and influencing public opinion in the face of Leftist and Maoist propaganda.¹²⁹

On 6 May 1967, what began as a labour strike at Li Ka-shing's 李嘉誠 Hong Kong Artificial Flower Works in San Po Kang turned into a riot. Chinese propagandists quickly capitalized on the conflict. Beijing's state newspaper, the *People's Daily* and the NCNA, its international media conglomerate, encouraged Hong Kong Leftists to mobilize all pro-communist and PRC-owned businesses to take part in the riots against the colonial government. The PRC saw the uprisings as an opportunity to gain a Cold War victory as they had in Portuguese Macau.¹³⁰ What Hong Kong police first described as a mere civil disturbance quickly escalated into a series of large-scale demonstrations and protests of over a thousand workers and youth. A labour dispute, thanks in part to top-down PRC intervention, transformed itself into a larger anti-colonial and ideological confrontation.¹³¹

On May 15, Luo Guibo 羅貴波, the PRC's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, summoned Donald Hopson, the British Chargé d'affaires in Beijing (1965-1968) and presented him with a Chinese Foreign Ministry declaration. The declaration mounted a vigorous protest against the British use of riot police against the Hong Kong Leftists. The declaration demanded that the

¹²⁷ Peter Moss, *No Babylon: A Hong Kong Scrapbook* (Bloomington: iUniverse, Inc., 2006) 94-95.

¹²⁸ Wong, "The Communist-inspired Riots in Hong Kong, 1967: A Multi-Actors Approach", 75-76.

¹²⁹ Legislative Council, Hong Kong, *Reports of the Meeting of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, sessions 1968* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1968).

¹³⁰ Man and Lun. *Eastern Fortress*, 256.

¹³¹ TNA, FCO 21/202, British Consulate, Tamsui to Hong Kong, 10 May 1967.

British: 1) accept all the local demands put forward by Hong Kong's resident Chinese workers and youth; 2) to release all those arrested during the riots; 3) punish Hong Kong authorities who suppressed the people; 4) guarantee that similar incidents would never happen again; and 5) that the British authorities accept responsibility for causing the violence.¹³² Unsurprisingly, this list of demands echoed the ones made to the Portuguese colonial government in Macau. The PRC's Foreign Ministry backed up the resolution with a call to action. It empowered the Beijing Municipal Revolutionary Committee to organize demonstrations in front of the British Mission in China to show support for their patriotic compatriots in Hong Kong.¹³³ Percy Cradock, political counsellor of the British Chargé d'affaires in Beijing since 1966, recorded how over the three days following May 15, over a million Red Guards demonstrated day and night in front of the British mission.¹³⁴ The mission was plastered with wall posters that proclaimed "Down with British Imperialism!" and "We strongly oppose British fascist authorities in Hong Kong."¹³⁵ Finally, on May 18, the Beijing Municipal Committee held a rally with over a hundred thousand Red Guards; the CCP's central leadership members were in attendance. Xie Fuzhi, secretariate of the Beijing Municipal Committee, gave a speech condemning British actions against the local Leftists and declared that the study and dissemination of Mao Zedong Thought was an absolute right of the patriotic compatriots of Hong Kong.¹³⁶ Overall, the top-down Chinese reaction to the initial breakout of riots in Hong Kong encouraged local Leftists and local CCP organs to continue the struggle.

¹³² "Chinese Government Lodges Most Urgent and Strongest Protest with British Government," *Peking Review*, Vol. 10, No. 21, May 15, 1967.

¹³³ Ma, *Wàijiāo bù wéngé jìshí*, 180.

¹³⁴ Percy Cradock, *Experiences of China* (London: John Murray, 1999), 56.

¹³⁵ Grey, *Hostage in Peking*, 61.

¹³⁶ Ma, *Wàijiāo bù wéngé jìshí*, 180.

Over the next several months, the violence between Hong Kong Leftists and the police escalated. Editorials were published in the PRC's *People's Daily* encouraging Hong Kong Leftists to fight British imperialism, the enemy of all Chinese. For instance, the 4 June editorial stated that "British imperialism is the extremely vicious colonial ruler of Hong Kong, and the enemy of the 4 million Chinese compatriots there and the enemy of the 700 million Chinese people." The editorial went on to state that "British imperialism has done so much evil, incurred so many blood debts and committed such towering crimes; these accounts must be settled!"¹³⁷ The editorials sounded like an official PRC exhortation to the people of Hong Kong to overthrow British rule.

On 8 July PRC propaganda was backed by action when 300-400 Chinese militia crossed the border into Hong Kong in Sha Tau Kok to attack a police outpost. A detachment of Gurkhas was required to drive back the militia.¹³⁸ While the British Special Branch later confirmed that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) did not sanction the attack, the Sha Tau Kok incident emboldened militant action by the Hong Kong Leftists.¹³⁹

Michael Gass, Acting Hong Kong Governor, agreed that to control the social unrest, Hong Kong needed to silence the communist press or else be prepared to give into the PRC and the Leftists. On 26 July, Gass sought approval from London to act against known Leftist strongholds.¹⁴⁰ Finally, on 31 July, W.S. Carter, head of the Hong Kong Department of the Commonwealth Office, agreed with Gass's call to thwart the spread of Maoist propaganda. Thus, in early August, the Commonwealth Office approved Gass's request to raid Leftist strongholds to

¹³⁷ "Resolutely Repel British Imperialist Provocations," *Peking Review*, Vol. 10, no. 24, June 9, 1967, 11-12.

¹³⁸ TNA, FCO 40/74, Gass to Commonwealth Office, Telegram No. 988, 9 July 1967.

¹³⁹ TNA, FCO 40/74, Gass to Commonwealth Office, Telegram N0.995, 10 July 1967; Government of Hong Kong, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1967*, 12; and "Boldly Arouse the Masses and Expand the Ranks for Struggle Against British Violence," *Peking Review*, Vol. 10, no. 29, July 14, 1967.

¹⁴⁰ TNA: PRO, FCO 40/113, Michael Gass to Commonwealth Office, Telegram No. 1112, 26 July 1967.

seize propaganda material and arrest key figures but advised caution when dealing with the PRC-owned press.¹⁴¹

The British and Hong Kong governments restricted civil liberty to crush the local communist presence in Hong Kong. Aside from police raids on Leftist propaganda centres, the British and Hong Kong governments distributed anti-Maoist leaflets on Cultural Revolution horrors, sponsored right-wing papers as a means to convince the public of Hong Kong's capitalist prosperity, and installed loudspeakers to broadcast songs from The Beatles to drown out the Bank of China's broadcast of Cultural Revolutionary songs.¹⁴² After the British authorities curtailed civil liberties and engaged in their anti-Communist propaganda campaign, PRC Premier Zhou Enlai ordered the Hong Kong Leftists to end the riots in December 1967.¹⁴³

Unrest in Britain's Chinatown and the British and Hong Kong Government's Response

The Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots reverberated across the globe, including among the Hong Kong Chinese who had migrated to Britain. During the Leftist Riots, members of the British-based pro-Beijing Kung Ho Association took to the streets of London to protest British imperialism in Hong Kong. They carried a portrait of Mao Zedong while chanting revolutionary songs and quotations from the Cultural Revolution. The Kung Ho Association's headquarters had long kept Britain's ethnic Chinese informed about the events in Hong Kong, albeit from a Leftist perspective. In fact, it was not until August 1967, after three months of social unrest, that the British and Hong Kong governments intervened to tell the ethnic Chinese community their side of the story. In their absence, members of the British Workers' Club organized "propaganda teams" to stage Cultural Revolution model operas across cities such as Birmingham, Liverpool,

¹⁴¹ TNA: PRO, FCO 40/113, Commonwealth to Michael Gass, Telegram No. 1582, 1 August 1967.

¹⁴² Denis Bray, *Hong Kong Metamorphosis* (Hong Kong University Press, 2001), 125.

¹⁴³ Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 127-129.

Manchester, and Edinburgh. When ethnic Chinese unsympathetic to the PRC derided them, members replied, “the Workers’ Club loves the motherland...what’s wrong with supporting China?”¹⁴⁴ And, support they did. Stephen Wong, owner of the Lan Chow Restaurant in Norwich, noted a local campaign by restaurateurs that summer to raise funds for their Leftists counterparts in Hong Kong.¹⁴⁵ The ethnic Chinese demonstrations in in Britain in support of the 1967 Hong Kong riots were minor in comparison to their originators; most ethnic Chinese residing in Britain remained neutral or, at the most, mildly sympathetic to the Leftist cause.

British and Hong Kong officials were left scratching their heads as to how and why certain members of Britain’s ethnic Chinese community demonstrated in support of the Hong Kong Leftists. A meeting between the head of the Liaison Office of the Hong Kong Government Office (HKGO) of London, the representative office of the Hong Kong government in Britain, and the staff of the New Territories Administration was held on 21 August 1967, to discuss the situation of Britain’s ethnic Chinese community. Lo Chi-chung, Liaison Officer of Yuen Long, Hong Kong, questioned if it was true that the unrest in Britain’s Chinatowns really proved any widespread support for Hong Kong Leftists. H.T. (Hing-tak) Woo, the head of the Liaison Office, believed it did, and that many community members were receiving direct advice and aid from PRC-friendly sources, including the Chinese Mission, and the PRC’s diplomatic representative in Britain. Furthermore, Woo confirmed that funds had been raised and remitted from Britain’s Chinatown to the Hong Kong Struggle Committee. Woo believed that Britain’s younger ethnic Chinese population was more susceptible to indoctrination and that many were swayed by Mao’s global power after the PRC’s successful explosion of a hydrogen bomb in 1964. As an intervention tactic, Yeung suggested they explore the feasibility of setting up a

¹⁴⁴ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 249-250; and Rawcliffe, “Turning a New Leaf,” 5.

¹⁴⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Stephen Wong Lap-kwong to Hon. Colonial Secretary, July 25, 1968.

modified form of a Kai Fong Association—a traditional mutual aid organization common in Hong Kong after World War Two—as it might provide an effective means of contact between the Office and the community, counteract Maoist influences, and demonstrate the Hong Kong government’s concern for the welfare of its overseas population. P.J. Williamson, Assistant District Officer of Tai Po, agreed with this approach and suggested making personal contacts with ethnic Chinese restaurateurs to head such a movement to bolster community leadership and interaction. Woo was skeptical whether a Kai Fong Association was feasible since the ethnic Chinese were scattered across Britain.¹⁴⁶

The concerns raised in the meeting between Woo and the heads of the New Territories Administration were taken up by K.Y. Yeung, the New Territories District Commissioner to Colonial Secretary Michael Gass on 24 August 1967. Yeung briefed Gass on the situation, shared demographic data on Britain’s ethnic Chinese community, and argued that the Liaison Office should be more active in servicing Chinatowns across Britain. He feared that if ameliorative measures were not taken then the left-wing influence would continue to be an ongoing nuisance for Britain and an even larger problem for colonial Hong Kong. Yeung reported, that on occasions that there were complaints in letters sent or by visiting members of Britain’s Chinatown to loved one’s in Hong Kong of complaints about the lack of social activities in Britain and an appraisal of the Chinese Mission to aid Chinatown members and of the left-wing press. As such, Yeung warned that unabated, this could lead to a weakening of support of the Hong Kong government by the people.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Notes on the Discussion between Mr. H.T. Woo, Head of the H.K. Chinese Liaison Office and Staff of the New Territories Administration, 21 August 1967: 1-3.

¹⁴⁷ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 24 August 1967, 1-3.

Meanwhile, the situation in Hong Kong and in British-Chinese relations continued to deteriorate. In August, the Hong Kong Leftists began a terror bombing campaign. In the PRC, British diplomats were ill-treated, and on 22 August, the British Mission in Beijing was set on fire. Chinese diplomats also staged demonstrations, and clashed with the London police and Britons on 29 August in what has become known as the “Battle of Portland Place.”¹⁴⁸

At least part of the reason the protests in London became tense was due to a high-level of xenophobic and anti-Communist attitudes among the British public. Woo, in his Liaison office’ half-yearly report that summer, shared that Chinese restaurants witnessed a slight decline in business in July. The Commonwealth Office telegraphed the Colonial Secretary and suggested the decline in business was the British public’s response to the poor treatment of the British diplomats in Beijing and Shanghai. However, Woo reported that, in the wake of the “Battle of Portland Place,” many Chinese restaurateurs reported having received physical and verbal attacks at the hands of British civilians and that the Chinese restaurants in Soho were effectively being boycotted. Woo believed that many Britons assumed that any person of Chinese ethnicity was a disciple of Chairman Mao and deserved such assaults. Not only did the British public’s reaction expose the British and Hong Kong governments’ failure to protect Britain’s ethnic Chinese from xenophobic attacks, the decline in restaurant sales also restricted the flow of remittances back to Hong Kong. Woo suggested that it would be useful to find out what the Britain’s ethnic Chinese community actually thought about the riots, colonial rule, and the Cultural Revolution. Most of the ethnic Chinese emigrants Woo had surveyed had declined to

¹⁴⁸ Loh, *Underground Front*, 113-114; MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*, 224-227; and Chi-kwan Mark, ‘Hostage Diplomacy: Britain, China, and the Politics of Negotiation, 1967-1969,’ *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 20 (2009): 473-493.

share their political views. However, Woo believed that there must be an underlying cause for community members to demonstrate support for the Hong Kong Leftists.¹⁴⁹

The members of the Hong Kong government, in particular the Colonial Secretary and the District Commissioner, wanted to see stability in Britain's Chinatowns to ensure the flow of remittance from the ethnic Chinese workers back to Hong Kong. Even at this point, it is clear that the British and Hong Kong governments were primarily concerned with the continued flow of remittance into the colony and wanted to shore up the migrants' homeland ties and the flow of over £2 million annually to the New Territories.¹⁵⁰ It was out of financial concern, more than anything else, that the British and Hong Kong governments decided to investigate the impact the 1967 Leftist Riots had upon Britain's ethnic Chinese community. David Lai (Kar-wah), Assistant Secretary for Chinese Affairs, was selected by government officials in November 1967 to conduct a study on why some Britain's ethnic Chinese were supportive of the 1967 Hong Kong riots. Lai was chosen based on his well-received study of illegal gambling in Hong Kong. He was also known for his interest in Britain's ethnic Chinese community and he was well respected among the community and government officials. Lai was also tasked to assess how the riots and their reverberations had impacted Britain's Chinese restaurant businesses, offer the colonial government's perspective on the riots to leaders in the ethnic Chinese community, and examine the Liaison Office's organization.¹⁵¹

There may have been a time lag but following the transnational spread of unrest in Hong Kong to the Empire's capital, the British and Hong Kong governments were forced to assess the

¹⁴⁹ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to Hon. Colonial Secretary, Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office Half Yearly Report, 9 October 1967: 1-4.

¹⁵⁰ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to D.C.S. (S.D.), 31 October 1967; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T., 10 June 1967; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 256; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 3.

¹⁵¹ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Minutes of a Meeting, 27 November 1967: 1; Bray, *Hong Kong Metamorphosis*, 187; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6.

threat and map out an intervention strategy. Homeland states and their agencies can influence the activities of migrants. However, the reasons for state intervention are not always benevolent. The primary impetus for intervention by the British and Hong Kong governments was not concern for the welfare of Britain's ethnic Chinese community but to end social disruption and to resume the steady flow of remittances back to the colony.¹⁵²

The Heung Yee Kuk's 鄉議局 and the Hong Kong Government

The Heung Yee Kuk (hereafter the Kuk) is a statutory advisory body representing business leaders in the villages and market towns of the New Territories. The Kuk, formed in the wake of the 1925 Guangzhou-Hong Kong Strike, was driven by anger among rural property owners towards the colonial government's decision to regulate construction and impose a building tax. The Kuk was formed to defend the "traditional" local government and to negotiate with the Hong Kong government to promote the welfare of the New Territories. The Kuk had a tripartite structure: village heads, rural committees, and the council.¹⁵³ The Kuk's relationship with the colonial government ebbed and flowed. At times, their interests coalesced and, at other times, they clashed. For example, the Hong Kong government withdrew recognition of the Kuk in 1957 when it was discovered that the election of Kuk leaders was rigged. Before recognizing the Kuk again, the colonial government enacted the Kuk Ordinance (1959) to ensure it was representative and democratically run.¹⁵⁴ Because of the Kuk's interest in the financial prosperity in the New Territories they shared with the British and Hong Kong governments a concern with

¹⁵² Guarnizo and Smith, "The Locations of Transnationalism," 7-8.

¹⁵³ Zhou, *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ*, 166-167; and Say H. Goo, "The Small House Policy and Tso and Tong Land," in *Resolving Land Disputes in East Asia*, eds., Hualing Fu and John Gillespie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 378.

¹⁵⁴ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 255; and Denis Bray, *Hong Kong Metamorphosis* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2001), 97.

how the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns upset the flow of remittance to the colony and disrupted their rural authority.

The Kuk had always kept track of remittances and Hong Kong Chinese emigration to Britain. The news of poor sales at Britain's Chinese restaurants due to British boycotts was met with alarm by the Kuk.¹⁵⁵ Brick-throwing, verbal insults, threats, and violence directed at Chinese restaurant owners and their establishments disrupted business for weeks in London, north England, the Midlands, and Scotland.¹⁵⁶ Many of these restaurants were owned by Kuk leaders. The chairmen of various Kuk Rural Committees, including those from Tai Po (Stephen Wong Yuen-cheung), San Tin (Man Ching-to), Sai Kung (North) (Wong Chun-wai), and Sha Tau Kok (Li Yuen-kwuen), often travelled to Britain to look in on their business interests. The Kuk leadership had a vested interest in restoring the British-Chinese restaurant trade. In the process of intervening to help quell the unrest, Kuk leaders also took the opportunity to expand their contacts and assert control over the New Territories and the ethnic Chinese populace.¹⁵⁷

The unrest of 1967 helped the Kuk deepen their alliance with the Hong Kong government. The Kuk proposed to send a goodwill delegation to visit Britain's major city centres and engage with the ethnic Chinese with the objectives to demonstrate the British and Hong Kong government's concern for the community. They also promised to provide an anti-Communist account of the 1967 Leftist Riots. The Kuk suggested a delegation composed of four senior representatives: Pang Fu-wah (Chairman of the Kuk until mid-1968), Cheung Yan-lung, Chan Yat-san, and Tang Nai-man. All four members were prepared to pay for their board and lodging but they asked the Hong Kong government to cover their travel expenses, including

¹⁵⁵ MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 224-225; and Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*, 115-127.

¹⁵⁶ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Liaison Officer H.T. Woo to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 9 October 1967.

¹⁵⁷ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T., 10 June 1967.

flight tickets at HK\$4,800 each and HK\$8,000 for travel while in Britain. The Hong Kong government cautiously accepted the proposal on 31 October. The British and Hong Kong governments were convinced that the Kuk's "traditional" authority and anti-left leanings would help quell the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns.¹⁵⁸ As such, state agencies drew upon the grassroots leadership of the Kuk to improve conditions in both Hong Kong and abroad, showing how the state frequently draws upon civilian institutions to further its aims.¹⁵⁹ The Kuk became a significant grassroots movement that was mobilized to by the colonial state and authorities to secure the goodwill of Britain's ethnic Chinese migrants and encourage support for the British and Hong Kong governments.

On 27 November 1967, Lai met with Heung Yee Kuk and the New Territories Administration staff to seek their advice. Lai's shared with the Kuk that he had been asked to investigate the unrest among Britain's ethnic Chinese community and to foster a better impression among them towards British rule. Lai informed the Kuk that he would be working in Britain for several months alongside Mr. Patrick Sedgwick, Director of the HKGO, and Mr. H.T. Woo while he undertook his study.¹⁶⁰ The Kuk delegates recognized that their own participation was going to be a complex operation. There were extensive preparations to be made, including lining up contacts with the Britain's ethnic Chinese communities in all the major cities. They would also need to rent cinemas, schedule meetings with the British authorities, prepare publicity, and develop a research plan to assess the political situation of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Fortunately, some of the leaders of the Kuk's Rural Committee already had personal

¹⁵⁸ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to D.C.S. (S.D.), 31 October 1967; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T., 10 June 1967; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 256.

¹⁵⁹ Alejandro Portes, "Immigration, Transnationalism, and Development: The State of the Question," in *The State and the Grassroots: Immigrant Transnational Organizations in Four Continents*, eds. Alejandro Portes and Patricia Fernández-Kelly (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 7-19

¹⁶⁰ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Minutes of a Meeting, 27 November 1967: 1-3.

contacts among restaurateurs in Britain, including Man Chu-shek, past Kuk Vice-Chairman. Man Chu-shek owned Chinese restaurants in Middlesex and was well-known and liked by San Tin emigrants working in Britain.¹⁶¹ Among segments of the Britain's ethnic Chinese community the news of the Kuk's goodwill tour was received with mixed feelings of surprise, excitement, and suspicion.¹⁶²

The Kuk delegation arrived in Britain on 18 January 1968 with plans to spend four days in London, four in Bristol, four in Birmingham, four in Manchester, five in Liverpool, five in Edinburgh, four in Newcastle, and then complete their trip with seven days. At their scheduled destinations, the Kuk presented film shows of popular Cantonese films, and attended dinner banquets, tea parties, press conferences, and other meeting and visits with Britain's ethnic Chinese community members.¹⁶³ On 21 February, the Kuk were to meet with British officials, including Lord Shepherd, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and George Thomson, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs. The following day, the Kuk were scheduled to join a cocktail party with Patrick Sedgwick the head of the HKGO. The Kuk's delegation was denied a request for an audience with Queen Elizabeth II. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office believed that because the Kuk represented people residing on a leased territory, an official meeting with the Queen would provoke the PRC and only create more tension within Hong Kong. Instead, it was decided that Lord Shepherd would receive the Kuk on the Queen's behalf.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. S.C.A., November 21, 1967; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T., June 10, 1968.

¹⁶² HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 46.

¹⁶³ TNA, FCO 30/131, Itinerary for Heung Yee Kuk Delegation.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, FCO 30/131, Carter to Cater, 2 January 1968; TNA, FCO 30/131, Carter to Godden, 17 January 1968; and TNA, FCO 30/131, Lai to Sedgwick, 1 February 1968.

The Kuk delegation met resistance upon arrival. Supporters of the Hong Kong Leftists tried to keep the delegation away from the mission and discredit its members. Restaurant owners received telephone calls advising them to boycott the delegation. Kuk delegate, Pang, received numerous messages “suggesting” that he and his colleagues should stop jeopardizing the struggle against the British and cease being “puppets” of the Hong Kong government. These telephone calls were from anonymous sources and there is no evidence to suggest they came directly from the Chinese Mission. Likewise, prior to the Kuk arrival, Hong Kong’s Struggle Committee mass mailed a New Year greeting to Chinese restaurants across Britain that condemned the Hong Kong government for its violence towards Leftist protesters. The letters accused the Kuk leadership of being “traitors” and “running dogs” of imperialism. Finally, whenever the Kuk held public events and film screenings, Leftists supporters staged their own meetings and screened Maoist propaganda films in the vicinity as a counterattraction.¹⁶⁵ Although there was no direct violence towards the Kuk delegation, demonstrations against their message dogged them across the country. Those with Maoist sympathies naturally considered the Kuk’s visit with distaste. At the same time, some restaurateurs declined to welcome the Kuk delegation as they did not wish to offend their workers who held pro-PRC sympathies.¹⁶⁶

The relationship between the Kuk and the Hong Kong government was strained during the tour. Already frustrated that their request to meet with the Queen was declined, Pang and Chan became “very angry” after the meeting with George Thomson, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, was cancelled because Thompson was required to attend the Swaziland Conference, which eventually led to the independence of Swaziland (now Eswatini).¹⁶⁷ The Kuk

¹⁶⁵ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 46-48.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Stephen Wong Lap-kwong to Hon. Colonial Secretary, July 25, 1968.

¹⁶⁷ TNA, FCO 30/131, Carter to Godden, 17 January 1968

delegation considered the last-minute cancellation an insult, and they contemplated boycotting their remaining meetings with British officials.¹⁶⁸ On 3 February, Governor David Trench intervened and wrote to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office stating that it would be desirable for the Kuk delegation to meet with Thomson, if only briefly, to demonstrate Britain's commitment. Trench believed a failure to give the Kuk delegation access to Thomson could lead the Kuk to withdraw their support for the British and Hong Kong governments, or worse, lead to the Kuk's deciding to support the Leftist cause.¹⁶⁹

Fortunately for both parties, Thomson agreed on 7 February to meet the Kuk delegation two weeks later but only for a brief fifteen minutes, to be followed up by a lengthier interview with Lord Shepherd.¹⁷⁰ For political reasons, it was important that Thomson, although essentially a courtesy call, met the Kuk to reaffirm that the British were taking the Kuk and their mission seriously. The Kuk needed an opportunity to share with the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs their findings on Britain's Chinatowns and relay the frustrations of the people of the New Territories.¹⁷¹ Although the relationship between the Kuk delegation and the Hong Kong government was fragile, compromises were made to further each other's agenda in quieting the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns.

Despite protest among some of members of Britain's ethnic Chinese community and challenges securing meetings with British officials, the Kuk aroused widespread interest among the ethnic Chinese and British public. Their visits to Britain's major cities were widely-reported in the press, radio, and television. The Cantonese films staged by the Kuk delegation met with overwhelming praise. Kuk leadership speeches were well-attended by Chinatown residents

¹⁶⁸ TNA, FCO 30/131, Commonwealth Office to Hong Kong, 2 February 1968.

¹⁶⁹ TNA, FCO 30/131, Hong Kong to Commonwealth Office, 3 February 1968.

¹⁷⁰ TNA, FCO 30/131, Brighty to Hong Kong Department, 7 February 1968.

¹⁷¹ TNA FCO 30/131, Points Likely to be Raised by the Heung Yee Kuk with Thomson, 13 February 1968: 1-2.

seeking information about the 1967 Leftist Riots and reassurance that Hong Kong had returned to normal. Overall, the Kuk successfully reassured the roughly 5,000 ethnic Chinese in Britain that the British and Hong Kong governments were actively assuming positive responsibility over the community's welfare. The Kuk delegation believed they had performed a worthwhile job.¹⁷²

On 21 February, the Kuk's goodwill tour concluded with a brief meeting with Secretary of State Thomson, followed by an audience with Lord Shepherd. During these meetings, the delegation presented a memorandum detailing the many problems faced by the ethnic Chinese community in Britain. While historian Benton has argued that the "Red tide" in Chinatown would have subsided, with or without the intervention of Kuk, who, Benton believed, never really won over the community,¹⁷³ Lai reported to the Hong Kong government that he believed the Kuk's mission had done much to arouse widespread interest among Britain's ethnic Chinese community in the happenings of the colony.¹⁷⁴ The Kuk's tour of Britain's Chinatowns represented a transnational project wherein grassroots organizations and government officials alternatively competed and cooperated, each seeking to extract maximum advantage from their engagement with Britain's ethnic Chinese community.¹⁷⁵

Although Lai conducted his survey Britain's ethnic Chinese community over the same period of the Kuk delegation's visit, he was careful to ensure that his project was separate from the Kuk's goodwill tour.¹⁷⁶ On 4 December, acting Colonial Secretary W.V. Dickinson gave Lai his official instructions. Lai was to examine the functions of the Liaison Office, establish the size of Britain's ethnic Chinese community, assess the influence of the PRC within the community,

¹⁷² HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Stephen Wong Lap-kwong to Hon. Colonial Secretary, July 25, 1968; and HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 46-48.

¹⁷³ Benton, "Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong," 343.

¹⁷⁴ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 46-48.

¹⁷⁵ Portes, "Immigration, Transnationalism, and Development: The State of the Question," 14.

¹⁷⁶ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. S.C.A., 21 November 1967.

and present his findings in a detail report with suggestions to improve the government's relationship with its overseas populace.¹⁷⁷ Lai left Hong Kong on 13 December 1967. He worked out of a London office until 16 April 1968, having extended his intended mission by four weeks. To better understand the situation faced by the ethnic Chinese, Lai organized several meetings with the heads of the Liaison Office, Ministry of Defence, Special Branch, and various local government authorities such as the regional police forces. In addition, Lai surveyed the ethnic Chinese emigrants, mainly restaurant owners and workers across Britain's major cities such as London, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Glasgow, and Manchester, to assess their level of sympathy for Chinese communism and their impressions of the 1967 Leftist Riots.¹⁷⁸

In carrying out his mission, Lai met with Sedgwick and Woo to form a general picture of the various government offices in London and the nature of each department's work. By the second week, Lai devoted every day to the Liaison Office and, through Woo and Victor Chan, Assistant Liaison Officer, Lai gained a more thorough appreciation of the array of problems brought to their attention by members of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Lai also discussed ethnic Chinese student complaints with G.P. Ferguson, head of the Students' Office. On four occasions, Sedgwick accompanied Lai in meetings with Mr. W.S. Carter of the Commonwealth Office. Through Carter, Lai was introduced to the Ministry of Defence and Special Branch, with whom he held three meetings. The Commonwealth Office arranged for Lai to visit various local government authorities, including the police and the Ministry of Labour.

Parallel to Lai's discussions with officials of the Hong Kong and British governments, Lai travelled extensively to meet with Chinese restaurant owners and workers in Britain's major cities. Before each tour, the Commonwealth Office contacted local government authorities to

¹⁷⁷ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretariat to Lai, 4 December 1967.

¹⁷⁸ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 3-6.

brief Lai on the peculiar problems in each location. Lai established many of these contacts through the Liaison Office. During Lai's tour he met with students and discussed various subjects, including the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots. In January, Lai talked to a group of Hong Kong students in the Hong Kong House and chaired a radio panel in London with four post-graduate Hong Kong students. On several occasions, Lai visited pro-Maoist social clubs under the guise of being a student so that he might talk freely among them. Lai also met and spoke to labour professionals, including doctors, social workers, and engineers. At the end of his tour, Lai held "round-up" meetings with Sedgwick, Woo, Carter, and the Ministry of Defence to discuss his findings. Overall, Lai contacted a broad cross-section of the ethnic Chinese population in Britain, spoke to more people than he originally anticipated, and pulled together a list of contacts for the Liaison Office. While not on tour, Lai worked out of an office at 54 Pall Mall and was provided with the necessary secretarial services to complete his mission.¹⁷⁹ His final report was submitted to the Hong Kong government on 9 May 1968.¹⁸⁰ The results of the survey revealed that few members of Britain's ethnic Chinese community were ardent supporters of Mao Zedong or of the Cultural Revolution, but rather sympathized with the 1967 Hong Kong Riots for pragmatic or superficial reasons.

Lai's survey included results from an impressive number of participants, including from South Eastern England (156 restaurants and 1,063 employees), South Western England (51 restaurants and 327 employees), Western Midlands (90 restaurants and 553 employees), Eastern Midlands (154 restaurants and 1,108 employees), Eastern England (156 restaurants and 1,063 employees), Northern Central England (360 restaurants and 2,332 employees), Northern England (62 restaurants and 534 employees), Channel Islands (6 restaurants and 30 employees), Northern

¹⁷⁹ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 5-6.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.: 67; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6.

Ireland (18 restaurants and 134 employees), Scotland (105 restaurants and 763 employees), and Wales (48 restaurants and 296 employees), and Greater London (318 restaurants and 1,882 employees). In total, Lai surveyed 1,481 restaurants, 2,000 restaurant owners, and 9,830 food workers across the United Kingdom. The survey did not include workers' and owners' families. Since the average size of the ethnic Chinese community's family was between 4-5 members, we can estimate that the population dependent on the restaurant business was nearly 20,000 in 1967-1968. In addition to the ethnic Chinese in the restaurant business, according to the records kept by the Student's Office, 4,184 Hong Kong students were studying in Britain in 1968. The remaining 20% of the ethnic Chinese in Britain are believed to have been employed in the grocery or laundry businesses. Lai's survey helps us to estimate that the size of the ethnic Chinese community in Britain was roughly 30,000 to 35,000, 80-90% of whom embarked from Hong Kong.¹⁸¹

Conclusion

The main impetus for the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns in 1967 was the dramatic events in the PRC and Hong Kong. The British and Hong Kong governments, in turn, were forced to respond to the transnational nature of the Cultural Revolution and the 1967 Leftist Riots "from the middle" by initiating a top-down survey by Administrative Officer Lai to understand how and why segments of Britain's ethnic Chinese community demonstrated in support of the Hong Kong Leftists. Concomitantly, the Hong Kong government and the Heung Yee Kuk, a New Territories' grassroots organization, gained bottom-up transnational support from Britain's Chinatowns in the wake of the 1967 Leftist Riots. The main driving factor prompting these interventions was to ensure that the Chinese restaurateurs and workers in Britain continued to

¹⁸¹ Ibid.: 15-18 and 74-75.

send remittance back to the colony to ensure its continued development and financial prosperity. Securing the political loyalty of ethnic Chinese migrants and returning stability were secondary considerations.

Chapter Three- To Turn a New Leaf: From State Indifference to State Commitment

The indifference shown by the British and Hong Kong governments towards ethnic Chinese migrants in the United Kingdom was a primary cause of the 1967 unrest, according to the investigation conducted by David Lai, Assistant Secretary for Chinese Affairs. For years the Hong Kong government had stayed largely aloof from the ethnic Chinese community in the colony and in Britain. The British government proved equally indifferent to the ethnic Chinese migrants. Until the late 1960s, the British authorities contributed very little to improving social welfare in Hong Kong and failed to implement any substantial political or social reforms. Their reluctance to introduce reforms was due to fear of retaliation from the PRC and from an ideological distaste of interfering with Hong Kong's laissez-faire economy.¹⁸² In Britain, state authorities and HKGO officials promoted charitable self-help rather than instituting any lasting government-funded social welfare policy. As such, the British and Hong Kong governments had developed little in the way of intervention strategies to mediate social conflicts. Ethnic Chinese migrants in Britain maintained a transnational link to Hong Kong by sponsoring and encouraging the migration of village members and family members, sending remittance money back home, investing in Hong Kong housing and construction, relaying messages through Chinese associations, and by circulating Hong Kong newspapers among their migrant communities. By maintaining these transnational ties many ethnic Chinese emigrants in Britain kept alive their own personal and collective economic and political grievances with colonial policy and the Hong Kong government. As Lai's survey reveals, the persistence of social disparity, exacerbated by the neglect shown by the British and Hong Kong governments was a key factor that led to the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns in the wake of the 1967 Leftist Riots. Belated recognition of these

¹⁸² Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 180-196; and Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 143-164.

complaints forced both governments to enact a series of reforms to slowly improve their standing in the eyes of Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

The first section of this chapter explores the specific grievances Hong Kong inhabitants held towards Hong Kong's political elite. The colonial government wielded almost absolute executive powers, and its structure remained virtually unchanged since the British established the colony in 1843. The Hong Kong government avoided social welfare expenditures in the colony for fear of Communist subversion and to avoid upsetting the tense Cold War balance. This was the complete opposite of Western nations that had embraced Keynesian welfare reforms as a means to prove that the quality of life was better in a capitalist society in opposition to Communism which sought to prove that inequalities could not be resolved within a capitalist marketplace.¹⁸³ The majority of ethnic Chinese emigrants reciprocated the Hong Kong government's indifference and blamed the colonial government for a decline in agricultural production and for the growing housing crisis.

The second section of this chapter explores the ethnic Chinese emigrant's dissatisfaction with their treatment in Britain. The British government left the affairs of its ethnic Chinese populace mainly to officials in the four agencies that comprised London's Hong Kong Government Office (HKGO). Lai's survey discovered numerous flaws in the functioning of the HKGO's Liaison Office. He reported that it was underfunded, understaffed, and virtually unknown to ethnic Chinese community. Instead, many ethnic Chinese migrants relied on aid and representation from the PRC's Chinese Mission. As such, the Chinese Mission filled a crucial social welfare and representational gap left unfilled by the British and Hong Kong governments.

¹⁸³ Daniel R. Fusfeld, "Economics and the Cold War: An Inquiry into the Relationship between Ideology and Theory," *Journal of Economic Issues* 32, no. 2 (1998): 505-511.

Finally, this chapter will examine how, as a result of Lai's survey of the causes of Britain's Chinatowns unrest in 1967, the British and Hong Kong governments belatedly realized the importance of offering state-led welfare policies and reforms to secure the loyalty of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Similarly, in Hong Kong, reforms championed by the Heung Yee Kuk were adopted by the colonial government in the wake of political unrest. In the years that followed Lai's 1967-1968 survey, the British and Hong Kong governments made significant policy adjustments to benefit the Britain's ethnic Chinese community and the Hong Kong Chinese in the colony, including expanded political representation for the New Territories within Hong Kong and increased funding and staff support for the Liaison Office in Britain.

Transnational Connection with Hong Kong

The international position of the Hong Kong government was precarious from the start of the Cold War. Hong Kong's post-World War Two relationship with the PRC, Taiwan, Britain, the United States, and among Southeast Asian nations was full of contradictions. To survive, the Hong Kong government adopted a strategy of "quiet accommodations" that allowed a certain level of influence from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Kuomintang (KMT), and from Cold War allies, Britain, and the United States. However, because of Hong Kong's ongoing status as a colony within the British Empire, these contesting and contradictory accommodations became interconnected, interdependent, and extremely difficult to balance. Both the British and Hong Kong governments, albeit for differing reasons, sought neither to appease nor to provoke Communist China to weigh in on state matters within Hong Kong and the New Territories.¹⁸⁴ Governor Alexander Grantham (1947-1957), the British official most responsible for setting Hong Kong's Cold War guidelines, carefully and quietly appealed for an American presence in

¹⁸⁴ Chang, *Screening Communities*, 25-27.

the colony so as not to alarm the PRC. Hong Kong's Cold War policy sought to thwart PRC efforts to forge a united anti-colonial and anti-capitalist movement within the colony. However, to protect its economic prosperity and to stave off any attempts by the PRC to forcefully reacquire the colony, Hong Kong officials were also willing to keep economic diplomacy open with the PRC.¹⁸⁵

While the Hong Kong government attempted to strike a delicate Cold War balance, internally, its weak democracy was overdue for a reckoning. The colonial government, with little public oversight, committed itself to a policy of laissez-faire governance. It opted for emergency strategic interventions only when faced with the risk of market failure, as seen when the state directed funds to support a large-scale public housing program in the early 1950s.¹⁸⁶ This non-interventionist practice was consistent with the longstanding principles of colonial trusteeship that stressed non-interference with indigenous customs, except in notable cases that offended British sensibilities. The British wished to avoid disrupting the persistence of traditional Chinese culture in the New Territories—like the traditional clan-based inheritance patterns that still exist today—a culture that in the PRC and Taiwan had declined resulting in social upheaval.¹⁸⁷ However, they did not want to come across as promoting Chinese culture which might have been construed as the promotion of Chinese nationalism or patriotism. The British commitment to “positive non-interventionism,” also meant its wholehearted promotion of unbridled capitalism. As rapid post-war industrialization shifted Hong Kong from an entrepôt to manufacturing economy, the government did little to address low wages or working conditions. With little regulation, and in direct competition with Japan and South Korea, Hong Kong industrialists

¹⁸⁵ Roberts, “Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities,” 37-42.

¹⁸⁶ Smart, *The Shek Kip Mei Myth*.

¹⁸⁷ Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97*, 132-136.

engaged in “cutthroat competition,” by producing low-priced, poor-quality goods and scrimping on wages and safety protections for workers. The Hong Kong government accepted that low wages, lax safety standards, and long hours were the price required to catch up with the developed countries. They well understood that their “only competitive advantage is lower labourer costs.”¹⁸⁸ If the colonial government did not compel industry to pay for workers’ wellbeing, neither did it raise corporate taxes to support a social welfare state. Although the Hong Kong government had done much to promote the colony’s unique position—as a geographical East/West nexus, as a source of cheap labour, or as an American tourist destination—the welfare of the citizenry was not a high priority for what was deemed a developing society. Besides, colonial officials argued, providing Keynesian reforms would only attract more refugees from the mainland, exasperate existing social problems, and disrupt investor confidence. State intervention was unnecessary, concluded the colonial leadership; religious and charitable organizations were already equipped to provide for the needs of the poor.¹⁸⁹

During the late 1940s and into the 1950s, the Hong Kong government became more autonomous from Britain, especially as it pertained to budgets and the day-to-day management of its affairs. And, in other areas, like British military protection, the colony remained dependent. However, even then, officials like Governor Grantham proved adept at limiting the amount of funds Hong Kong contributed to the expense of maintaining the British garrison.¹⁹⁰ Hong Kong parliamentary debates frequently centred on the difference between policy within the colony versus the metropole, notably how Britain had adopted Keynesian welfare policy while Hong

¹⁸⁸ Alex H. Choi, “State-Business Relations and Industrial Restructuring,” in *Hong Kong’s History: State and Society Under Colonial Rule*, ed. Tak-wing Ngo (London: Routledge, 1999), 142-143.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 152; and Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 146.

¹⁹⁰ Roberts, “Cold War Hong Kong: Juggling Opposing Forces and Identities,” 36.

Kong had not. Such differences occasionally prompted British intervention as it did in the late 1960s when it compelled the Hong Kong government to introduce an eight-hour workday for women.¹⁹¹ However, for the most part, Britain stayed out of the fray of direct governance, and confined itself to providing security for the colony against a potential Chinese invader. Britain promoted Hong Kong as a prized colony of a diminished Empire, a colony that stood as the last bastion of capitalism on Chinese soil. Britain was pleased that Hong Kong was one of its few colonies that was financially self-sufficient and not a burden on the British taxpayer.¹⁹² Finally, Hong Kong was also valued by the British government because it was a conduit for intelligence on the PRC and allowed Britain some influence over American Cold War policy towards the PRC and Taiwan. Britain allowed the American government to use Hong Kong as a base for American intelligence where it could conveniently produce and distribute anti-Communist propaganda. For these reasons, economic and cultural relations between Hong Kong, Britain, and the United States were quite close from the end of Second World War until well into the 1960s.¹⁹³

Britain's ethnic Chinese migrant community also held Hong Kong as a colony of significance. Hong Kong served as a centre of migration and a transnational economic hub for family remittances. Following the war, many ethnic Chinese migrants from Hong Kong established restaurants in London and Liverpool and, in turn, created a system of sponsorship to enable larger-scale immigration of family and village friends to join them in the metropole. However, a positive impression of colonial Hong Kong, as Steve Tsang has observed, faced

¹⁹¹ Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97*, 49; and David Clayton, "The Riots and Labour Laws: The Struggle for an Eight-Hour Day for Women Factory Workers, 1962-1971," in *May Days in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967*, eds., Ray Yep and Robert Bickers (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 141-142

¹⁹² Man and Lun, *Eastern Fortress*, 250-251.

¹⁹³ Ying, "Censorship, Regulations, and the Cinematic Cold War in Hong Kong (1947-1971)," 139.

significant challenges by the late 1940s.¹⁹⁴ Some of Britain's ethnic Chinese community saw the positive in Hong Kong's rapid postwar industrial development while others were attuned to the numerous social and economic problems that plagued the colony, from plummeting agricultural production, the housing crisis, and the general unwillingness to introduce welfare reforms. Ties were maintained between the two communities, not only with the flow of pound sterling to Hong Kong, but also regular flow of newspapers, letters, and people between Britain's Chinatowns and the colony. Regular visits by Britain's ethnic Chinese community members back to colony occurred every two to six years with an average stay of six months to attend to familial and financial matters and festivals. Dependents from Hong Kong would come to live and work in Britain, while those who did not want to permanently settle in Britain averaged eight years absence from Hong Kong.¹⁹⁵ Thus, a strong transnational link was maintained by the Chinese communities of Britain and Hong Kong.

Hong Kong can be geographically divided into three territories—Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories, including its 260 territorial islands. While it was on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon where the post-war factories popped up, the largest zone, the New Territories, remained primarily dependent on the agricultural sector. Since the New Territories bordered the PRC, this was also the location where Chinese immigrants were most likely to enter the colony. It was also where mainland Chinese migrants most frequently settled upon rented land, growing vegetables for the Hong Kong market. The influx of Chinese immigrants spurred what James L. Watson has called the “vegetable revolution,” transforming the New Territories from its traditional rice-based economy into small-scale, market-orientated vegetable

¹⁹⁴ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 142.

¹⁹⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 24 August 1967, 1-3; Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 79-87; and Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 133-154.

production.¹⁹⁶ This change in agricultural production disrupted life in rural Hong Kong. Before the end of the Chinese Civil War, subsistence rice growing dominated agriculture in the New Territories. The New Territories were known for growing both white and red rice. White rice, grown in fresh water, was considered more valuable. It sold in 1959 for HK\$45 per picul. Red rice, which could handle salt water cultivation, was of lower quality and sold for HK\$30. From the seventeenth to the middle of the twentieth century, the agricultural lineages population of the New Territories reached demographic equilibrium and village populations stabilized.¹⁹⁷ But three centuries of a stable rice economy were upended as Chinese refugees fleeing the mainland began to arrive in the post-war period.

Many of these newcomers were skilled agriculturalists who entered into direct competition with traditional New Territories' farmers. Chinese refugees capitalized on an expanding urban market for vegetables and began converting paddy land to vegetable plots. Hong Kong colonial officials encouraged the vegetable revolution as they saw it as a means to advance food sovereignty in the colony and to decrease its reliance on agricultural trade with the PRC. A logistical system was created by the government to aid farmers in transporting goods to the market. This cooperative system solved the transportation problem and provided higher profits for the farmers. Indeed, the vegetable market proved so profitable that it convinced many traditional New Territories rice farmers to switch to vegetable cultivation. In 1954, seventy percent of the agricultural land was devoted to rice cultivation; by 1966, only forty-four percent of New Territories farmland were paddy fields.¹⁹⁸ To compensate for declining rice production, the Hong Kong government began to import cheap rice from Thailand. Thailand, which had

¹⁹⁶ Watson, *Emigration and Chinese Lineage*, 30.

¹⁹⁷ James L. Watson, "Saltwater Margin: A Common-Fields System in South China," *Past & Present* 224 (2014): 251-253.

¹⁹⁸ Watson, *Emigration and Chinese Lineage*, 43-44; and Parker, "Chinese People in Britain," 75.

recently introduced American-based parboiling technology, would come to dominate the global rice market.¹⁹⁹ Historian Watson has argued that the inability for the remaining New Territories' rice farmers to with the cheap imported Thai rice, combined with agricultural labourer wage inflation, caused the collapse of the traditional economy. In his interviews with New Territories villagers, Kwee Choo Ng provides evidence that the disruption in rice cultivation, a paucity of available arable land, and a limited amount of urban, industrial jobs, were major factors provoking young people to leave the colony. As scholar Gregor Benton notes, farmers in the New Territories came to blame the Hong Kong government for allowing the importation of cheap foodstuffs from Thailand and the PRC and for encroaching on the finite amount of farmland in order to build new infrastructural projects.²⁰⁰ Many of the Hong Kong Chinese who were on the losing end of the vegetable revolution and Hong Kong's cheap food policies and who sought a better life in Britain, regarded themselves as victims of British colonial policy and were receptive to an anti-imperialist and pro-Marxist worldview.

Hong Kong's housing problem was apparent even before the conclusion of the Second World War. A fear of attracting more Chinese refugees dissuaded the Hong Kong government from any public housing initiative. As David Faure has stated, "Britain had no social policy on Hong Kong as such."²⁰¹ By the late 1930s, poor families were frequently abandoning the corpses of relatives as they were too poor to afford a burial. Nonetheless, the Colonial Office did not direct the Hong Kong government to intervene.²⁰² Even without welfare reforms, PRC refugees

¹⁹⁹ Peter Janssen, "How Thailand became World's Biggest Rice Exporter with Hong Kong's Help," *South China Morning Post* (Bangkok: Thailand), November 8, 2018; and Stephen W.K. Chiu and Ho-fung Hung, "State Building and Rural Stability," in *Hong Kong's History: State and Society Under Colonial Rule*, ed., Tak-wing Ngo (London: Routledge, 1999), 85-87.

²⁰⁰ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 51-53; Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 24-25; and Benton, "Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong," 333.

²⁰¹ David Faure, ed., *A Documentary History of Hong Kong: Society* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997), 1.

²⁰² Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 109.

entered the colony in record numbers following the Second World War, exacerbating the housing crisis, while the colonial government failed to release land for development and housing and struggled to rebound quickly following the Japanese occupation. Hong Kong residents who could not afford private rental units resorted to squatting. Alan Smart estimates that between 1950 and 1964 the number of squatters throughout Hong Kong ranged from 250,000-650,000. Squatters lived in shanty housing built illegally on Crown land.²⁰³ In his study of Hong Kong urban housing problems over roughly this same period, Leo Goodstadt observed that “if general standards of housing were better, there would be less inducement for people to become squatters...it is no wonder that people are willing to flee from high rents to wooden shacks.”²⁰⁴

Hong Kong’s housing crisis inevitably led to large squatter settlements throughout the colony. These squatter enclaves were centres for congestion, crime, poverty, disease, and fires. Fire outbreaks that left an estimated 190,047 squatters homeless throughout the 1950s would lead to civic unrest by local Leftists. On 21 November 1951, a fire at Tung Tau Village in Kowloon destroyed 3,000 huts and rendered more than 25,000 homeless, although the government officially claimed that it displaced only 10,000.²⁰⁵ On 1 March 1952, in the aftermath of the Tung Tau Village fire, the Southern China Bureau in Guangzhou sent a relief delegation with funds and goods for the fire victims.²⁰⁶ Since 1950, Governor Grantham had resisted significant housing and social welfare reforms due to fear of communist subversion. He was also guided by his belief in *Kai Fong* (neighbourhood) voluntary association and his

²⁰³ Smart, *The Shek Yip Mei Myth*, 12-19.

²⁰⁴ Leo Goodstadt, “Urban Housing in Hong Kong, 1945-63,” in *Hong Kong: A Society in Transition*, ed., I.C. Jarvie and Joseph Agassi (London: Frederick Praeger, 1969), 280.

²⁰⁵ Smart, *The Shek Yip Mei Myth*, 2; Lu Yan, “Limits to Propaganda: Hong Kong’s Leftist Media in the Cold War and Beyond,” in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, eds., Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 104; and Government of Hong Kong, *Hong Kong Annual Report 1952* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Press, 1953), 5.

²⁰⁶ Zhou, *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ*, 83-84; Jin, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mǐwén shìlù*, 25-26.

perception that private charities were the best means to provide social welfare. Overall, the Hong Kong government was insensitive to the victims of the fires, and its resettlement plans often moved the displaced to faraway places not connected to public transportation.²⁰⁷

The social discontent around housing came to a head on 1 March 1952, the same day a Chinese relief mission from Guangdong province arrived in Hong Kong to aid the victims of the Tung Tau Village. The pro-communist Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) organized a mass gathering of 10,000-20,000 near the Tsim Sha Tsui train station to protest against the government's action to bar the Chinese relief mission from arriving in Hong Kong. Violence broke out when the police arrived. Fearing a Communist-led uprising, the Hong Kong government barred Chinese relief missions from entering the colony. In the melee, one worker died, and two others were injured after the police opened fire to disperse the crowd.²⁰⁸ The Hong Kong Leftist press attacked the state for its draconian response and compared the charitable efforts of the Chinese relief mission with the failure of the Hong Kong government to address the poor social conditions of its residents. Alan Smart has argued that the Hong Kong government's decision to construct multistory "resettlement estates" following the subsequent Shek Kip Mei squatter fire on 24 December 24, 1953," did not represent a radical break from earlier policies towards housing.²⁰⁹ Contrary to the "Shek Kip Mei myth" that believed the Hong Kong government only began resettling squatters following the squatter fire of Shek Kip Mei, the Hong Kong government did move to resettle squatters following the 1952 Tung Tau Village fire as officials feared further civil disturbance and communist-led uprisings and the disruption of Hong Kong's vulnerable geopolitical position. Although more than thirty percent of Hong

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 84; and Smart, *The Shek Yip Mei Myth*, 73-94.

²⁰⁸ Zhou, *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ*, 87-89.

²⁰⁹ Smart, *The Shek Yip Mei Myth*.

Kong's populace lived in government housing by the 1960s, Hong Kong welfare state remained far behind the industrialized nations. The small, overcrowded apartments in the new public housing projects were often little better than the squatter huts.²¹⁰ As such, the Hong Kong government's paltry reaction to a wave of squatter fires and an ongoing housing shortage reinforced the public perception of the Hong Kong government as an uninterested, distant state. This stood in sharp contrast to the quick response by Hong Kong Leftist and PRC relief missions who quickly established relief funds and positioned themselves as champions for the well-being of the people of Hong Kong. These perceptions were widely shared even among the ethnic Chinese community in Britain.

The rise of Hong Kong's labour movement as a significant social and ideological force was another critical factor that encouraged a more positive impression of Maoism among Chinese migrants, even if they were not ideological inclined towards Communism. In 1948, during the Chinese Civil War, Hong Kong workers were divided into two politically oriented trade union councils, the pro-communist FTU and the pro-KMT Trade Union Council (TUC).²¹¹ The numerous industrial conflicts in Hong Kong in the late 1940s led to a dramatic decline in labour strikes throughout the 1950s. Workers' bargaining power was weakened in the 1950s with the influx of surplus labourers from the mainland. Neither the FTU nor the TUC were able to secure much in the way of worker benefits in this period; among the few gains was the establishment of four to five paid holidays a year.²¹² It did not help that political division and rivalry between the FTU and TUC was exploited by the Hong Kong government and corporate

²¹⁰ Elise Tu, *Colonial Hong Kong in the Eyes of Elsie Tu* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 45.

²¹¹ Tai-Lok Lui and Stephen W.K. Chiu, "Social Movements and Public Discourse on Politics," in *Hong Kong's History: State and Society under Colonial Rule*, ed., Tak-Wing Ngo (London: Routledge, 1999) 102; and Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 170.

²¹² Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 170.

leaders. Instead of securing bargaining wins, both unions concentrated on replenishing their strength by building up their educational, cultural, and welfare services to members. The primary goal for both unions was to boost their public image and political status.²¹³ That the FTU was subservient to the CCP and the TUC to the KMT, meant that neither labour council really represented the interests of the local workers. Both councils were known to modify their programs to fall in line with the political situation or policy set by the PRC or Taiwan. By the 1960s, the FTU was the stronger of the two unions due to funding support from the PRC.

Between 1960 and 1966, inflation and a labour shortage characterized Hong Kong's economy, following a decade of rapid economic growth. As a result, the labour union's involvement in strikes declined and remained low. The FTU often refrained from direct involvement in industrial disputes as the PRC worried that strike actions would undermine trade with the colony.²¹⁴ Continued opposition between the two labour federations led to a decline in overall union membership. Rather than putting workers' interests first, FTU and TUC rivalry devolved into a basic ideological rivalry between pro-CCP and pro-KMT trade union leadership. While this put "Chinese politics on Hong Kong soil," the issues at stake lay elsewhere.²¹⁵

Although wages increased in the early 1960s, a rapid rise in the cost of living, particularly uncontrolled rent fees, outstripped the growth in wages and revealed the growing disparity between rich and poor. It has been estimated that real wages increased by 56 percent between 1961-1965, but rent increased by 40 percent, rice by 10 percent, school fees by 43 percent, daily necessities by 30 percent, and clothing by 20 percent.²¹⁶ The average Hong Kong

²¹³ Benjamin Leung and Stephen Chiu, *A Social History of Industrial Strikes and the Labour Movement in Hong Kong, 1946-1989* (Hong Kong: Social Sciences Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, 1991), 25-26.

²¹⁴ Leung and Chiu, *A Social History of Industrial Strikes and the Labour Movement in Hong Kong, 1946-1989*, 34.

²¹⁵ Lui and Chiu, "Social Movements and Public Discourse," 103.

²¹⁶ Leung and Chiu, *A Social History of Industrial Strikes and the Labour Movement in Hong Kong, 1946-1989*, 42; and *Wah Kiu Yat Po* (April 4, 1963).

worker continued to work more than ten hours a day, seven days a week. Hong Kong workers had little in the way of leisure time. To make matters worse, the Hong Kong government often chose not to prosecute employers who ignored the few labour regulations that did exist.²¹⁷

Workers disputed the Hong Kong government's *Report on the Survey of Government Wages and Salaries, 1963*, which controversially concluded that the cost of living between 1958 and 1962 increased by only 3.5 to 5 percent for labourers and artisans, and by 5 to 9 percent for white-collar workers. The government report opined that, since workers in most industries benefited from a 15 percent wage increase in 1960 alone, there was no justification for further wage increases.²¹⁸ Declining purchasing power coupled with a government peddling dubious inflationary data, provided ample reasons for worker discontent with British colonial rule.

The 4-10 April 1966 Star Ferry Riots mark the birth of civic activism among the youth of Hong Kong. The disturbances were a series of demonstrations, marches, riots, and violence triggered by a hunger strike led by So Sau-chung 蘇守忠 who stopped eating to protest the raising of ticket prices by the Star Ferry Company. When the police arrested Sau-chung for obstruction, thousands of young people rioted. When protesters gathered outside Government House the police were ordered to break up the crowd and arrest key figures. The violence continued for seven days. By 10 April there were fifty-nine dead, over four hundred wounded, and nearly two thousand arrested. Property damage was estimated to be HK\$20 million.²¹⁹ What makes the 1966 Riots an outlier from other Hong Kong protests is that they lacked support from either the CCP or KMT, there was little in the way of a consistent ideological message, and there

²¹⁷ Young, "The Building Years: Maintaining a China-Hong Kong-Britain Equilibrium, 1950-71," 137; and Joe England and John Rear, *Chinese Labour Under British Rule* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1975), 65.

²¹⁸ Geoffrey Cadzow Hamilton, *Survey of Government Wages and Salaries, 1963* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1963).

²¹⁹ Loh, *Underground Front*, 104; and Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 13-15.

was no overt anti-British or anti-colonial flavour to the demonstrations. Instead, Hong Kong Leftists discouraged the protestors and portrayed the discontent to be largely about the need for better wages and job security.²²⁰ The official report, *Kowloon Disturbances 1966: Report of Commission of Inquiry*, concluded that the riots were spontaneous and uncoordinated, and that there was no indication of political exploitation of the situation. The Commission of Inquiry believed the riots were caused by a lack of national cohesion within Hong Kong due to poor employment opportunities, a housing shortage, a complete lack of social programs, and a failure of communication between the public and the government.²²¹ Overall, the Star Ferry Riots exposed long-standing social problems within Hong Kong. British colonial authorities had yet to rectify these problems before the outbreak of the Leftist Riots one year later.

While the 1966 Star Ferry Riots were not a Communist plot, they raised awareness of inflationary woes and the agricultural and housing crises, all of which were causing an erosion in confidence towards Hong Kong's colonial leadership. The launch of the Cultural Revolution in May 1966 provided a spiritual boost to the Leftist camp in Hong Kong, while the riots in Macau in December that same year served as a template for the anti-colonial campaign waged against the British-Hong Kong authorities in 1967. The political overtones and slogans of the Cultural Revolution upended Cold War international relations. "The East Wind is stronger than the West Wind," declared its promoters. Attacks by Chinese leaders against "Soviet revisionism" and "American imperialism," and the labelling of capitalist regimes as "paper tigers" encouraged Chinese compatriots abroad, especially those under colonial rule, to revolt and bring the capitalists to their knees.²²² Such inciting propaganda found some traction even among Chinese

²²⁰ Zhou, *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ*; and *Wen Wei Po* (April 9, 1966).

²²¹ Government of Hong Kong, *Kowloon Disturbances 1966: Report of Commission of Inquiry* (Hong Kong: J.R. Lee, Acting Government Printer, 1967).

²²² Leung and Chiu, *A Social History of Industrial Strikes and the Labour Movement in Hong Kong, 1946-1989*, 43.

refugees in British colonial Hong Kong.²²³ However, actual Maoists among Hong Kong's ethnic Chinese population were few; what motivated interest in Cultural Revolution rhetoric was not socialist values, but the persistence of poor working conditions and the appalling state of welfare provisions. The same would be true among Britain's ethnic Chinese.

The HKGO and the Ethnic Chinese Community

Lai's 1967-1968 report identified the poor relationship between the HKGO and its Liaison Office section with the ethnic Chinese community as a key factor for Maoist support and the unrest that broke out in Britain. The British government avoided the governing of the ethnic Chinese who had settled in the metropole. Instead, it left the affairs of its ethnic Chinese populace mainly in the hands of the Hong Kong government and the four agencies that operated on British soil: the HKGO on 54 Pall Mall, London; and its three subordinates, the Hong Kong Students' Office, the Hong Kong House at Lancaster Gate, and the Chinese Liaison Office in Abbey House, Victoria Street. The Hong Kong Planning Unit, the HKGO's progenitor, was established in London towards the end of the Second World War. The original unit was primarily concerned with supplying materials for the relief and rehabilitation of the colony after its liberation from the Japanese. Following Hong Kong's liberation, most of the planning unit's staff returned to Hong Kong, but a "rear-link" was maintained in London. This "rear-link," operated under E.G.A. Grimwood. Grimwood was instrumental in the subsequent development of the HKGO. He served as its director from 1951 until the early 1960s. With rapid industrialization and expanded trade in Hong Kong, the HKGO's responsibilities expanded. Initially, Grimwood was responsible to the Colonial Secretariat, but with the new emphasis on trade, the HKGO was put under the purview of the Director of Commerce and Industry. Grimwood liaised with the

²²³ Yan, "Hong Kong's Leftist Media in the Cold War and Beyond," 111-112; and Jin, *Secrets and Facts of the Chinese Communist Party's Hong Kong Policy*, 87-92.

British government on all matters of Hong Kong's trade with Britain, including the cotton textile agreement and the Commonwealth Preference. Likewise, the Director was tasked with the promotion of the sale of Hong Kong goods to Britain and to disseminate information regarding the colony's trade and industry.²²⁴

In 1960, to meet the HKGO role of publicity and information distribution, it became necessary to hire Mr. W.R. Boxall in the role of Information Officer in the newly established Information Section. The HKGO credited Boxall's energetic approach to the promotion and dissemination of a wide range of information on trade, employment conditions, labour legislation and statistics on wage levels and inflation, all which Boxall cast in a way that presented a favourable image of the colony to the British public. The vast majority of the HKGO's focus was on the promotion of colonial commerce and industry. By 1968, the staff of the HKGO totalled 17, with a financial expenditure estimated at HK\$702,000 (£48,100).²²⁵

The Students' Office became an arm of the HKGO in 1955. The British government had directed its colonial governments to play a more active role in provisions for the growing number of colonial students enrolled at British educational institutions. Mr. G.P. Ferguson was appointed the HKGO Students' Office's first Director (later retitled to Advisor). Initially, the new unit operated within the Colonial Office, but in 1957 it was moved to the Hong Kong House and, in 1966, to Abbey House, Victoria Street. The HKGO never really instructed the Advisor on his roles and responsibilities and operated with a small staff and on a shoe-string budget. The Student Office did keep records of all students and their placements. It also offered some student

²²⁴ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, The Future of the Hong Kong Government's Agencies in London, A Report by Mr. W.V. Dickinson, August 1968: 2-4; Mark Hampton, "Projecting Britishness to Hong Kong: The British Council and Hong Kong House, Nineteen-Fifties to Nineteen-Seventies," *Historical Research* 85, no. 230 (2012): 706; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 3.

²²⁵ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, The Future of the Hong Kong Government's Agencies in London, A Report by Mr. W.V. Dickinson, August 1968: 4 and 6-9.

welfare provisions, including the arrangement of accommodations and advising on any personal problems. However, the Students' Office's primary responsibility was recruiting potential students to British universities and colleges who could afford to pay full tuition. In 1962, the Student's Office expanded to include servicing the London Selection Board, by assisting in the recruitment of local candidates to fill vacancies within Hong Kong's public service and government offices.²²⁶

The HKGO's Chinese Liaison Office came into existence in June 1962. The Liaison Office was sponsored by the Colonial Secretariat, which, from 1961, had become increasingly concerned with the absence of any official liaison links with the growing number of ethnic Chinese residing and employed in Britain. The Liaison Office was run by Mr. H.T. (Hing-tak) Woo, who also worked part-time as Assistant Student Advisor in the Students' Office. As stipulated in terms of reference, Woo's task was to give all possible assistance to ethnic Chinese working in Britain. This included addressing any employment concerns or problems with family members still residing in Hong Kong. Woo maintained contacts with England's main employment centres and made regular reports.²²⁷

For two years, Woo operated the Liaison Office single-handedly without any supporting staff. Supportive filing and typing work were unofficially completed by the clerical staff of the Students' Office. Due to Woo's commitment as an Assistant Student Advisor, he spent less than one-third of his working time assisting ethnic Chinese workers in Britain. In his first Liaison Office report to the Hong Kong government, Woo reported that he sent out a circular to ten government departments on 24 May 1962 directing them to publicize the new office in local

²²⁶ Ibid., 12-14.

²²⁷ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, 7; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretariat, Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office, May 24, 1962; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6.

Hong Kong papers. While the District Commissioner of the New Territories shared his enthusiasm in spreading the word of the newly established Liaison Office and was keen to inform the Heung Yee Kuk, the extent of the office's publicity was a small three-paragraph article in a handful of newspapers, including the *South China Morning Post*.²²⁸ Woo also shared in his first report that he had held several meetings with the Committee Members of the Chinese Restaurateur Association in Britain to explain the function of the new office. However, since the office was in London and Woo had very little time to travel to other major centres of ethnic Chinese employment, including Liverpool and Manchester, news of the Liaison Office among the ethnic Chinese migrants did not reach far outside of London. As will be seen, only a very few in London were even fully aware of the proper function of the Liaison Office.²²⁹ In May-June 1962 there was a communication failure between the HKGO and the Hong Kong government in regard to publicity of the new office to Hong Kong residents. S.T. Kidd, the District Commissioner of the New Territories, reported his displeasure to the Director of Information Services of having not been informed of Woo's press release on 28 May about the establishment of the new agency. Kidd argued that, had he been better informed, he would have been better able to advertise the new office to the residents of the New Territories.²³⁰

Woo's first report also recommended that a thorough survey of Britain's ethnic Chinese community be conducted to understand the issues its members faced and to adequately promote the services of the Liaison Office. What he had gathered so far was that while unemployment was an issue, especially in London and Liverpool, it was not as severe as was previously

²²⁸ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Director of Information Services, 8 June 1962; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Chinese Letter to Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Heung Yee Kuk, 8 June 1962; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Extracted from S.C.M. Post, 29 May 1962.

²²⁹ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office, London: Report for the Period from June to September

²³⁰ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Director of Information Services, 8 June 1962.

believed. He found that the unemployed typically secured employment in another Chinese restaurant within a month. Woo had also ascertained that ethnic Chinese workers in Britain were interested in the maintenance of a list of Chinese restaurants and employment opportunities. They also sought information on employment vouchers, procedures to apply for naturalization, and visa policies to bring their families to Britain.

According to Woo's first report, the number of despatched correspondences from the Liaison Office between June to September 1962 totalled 27 to Hong Kong, 18 to Hong Kong government departments, 20 to London, and 8 to the British provinces. The number of visits to the Liaison Office totalled 66. Woo noted that small groups of English church members, of various denominations, sought to provide material assistance to the ethnic Chinese workers, but the language barrier hampered such attempts. Interestingly, Woo reported that the British government already provided sufficient welfare to the ethnic Chinese community, and that the Liaison's Office should focus its energy on those from the New Territories who were most likely to not be able to communicate in English. Perhaps because Woo thought the community's welfare was already well in-hand, by the end of 1962 he reported that he did not believe the office required a full-time officer or a full-time clerk. The following year, Woo only spent two hours daily on liaison work, with the remainder of his time reserved for the Students' Office.

The work of the Liaison Office involved consular-style care for Britain's ethnic Chinese residents throughout the 1960s. The Liaison Office offered legal and personal advice between family members in Britain and Hong Kong, including on such matters as marriage, bigamy, migration, and remittance. Woo frequently received inquiries about the whereabouts of family members working in Britain and/or requests for family members to join their fathers and husbands overseas.

On 17 July 1962, the District Officer of Kowloon tasked Woo to locate Mr. Ho Tai-Fook, whose wife, Janet Fook of Sai Kung, was worried after he broke off regular contact and stopped sending any remittance. Woo wrote to Ho's last known employer, a Chinese restaurant named Central Café in Liverpool, but Ho no longer worked there. Fortunately, staff members forwarded the letter to Ho's home address. However, Ho, who could not read or write English, did not respond. It was not until 13 August that Woo shared with the District Office of Kowloon that he could not travel to Liverpool to check on Ho as he had prior commitments with the Students' Office. The Liaison Office's work was consistently hampered by understaffing and a lack of resources to send Woo outside of the capital. In another instance, a woman complained to Woo when he was visiting Hong Kong that her husband had stopped sending his remittances. Woo told her that he would enquire to her husband's whereabouts in Newcastle via a letter, but that he would not be able to take the five or six hour train trip to check in on her husband in-person.²³¹ In the case of Ho, it took almost a year before Mr. Lai Chi Cheung of the New Territories Administration was able to visit Liverpool where he learned that Ho was not legally married to Fook and that he had taken on a European wife.²³²

Woo also followed up on minor cases involving migration of family members from Hong Kong to Britain. He also helped to secure marriage licences, employment vouchers, and passports to Britain's ethnic Chinese emigrant community.²³³ Throughout the 1960s it typically

²³¹ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Petition from Chairman and Vice Chairman of Tai Po Rural Committee, 8 February 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, D.C., T.P. to D.C., N.T., 15 February 1964; and D.D.C.N.T. to D.O.T.P., 20 February 1964.

²³² HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Office, Kowloon to Liaison Officer, 17 July 1962; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Janet Fook to H.T. Woo, 26 July 1962; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, H.T. Woo to District Officer, 13 August 1962.

²³³ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Leung to Woo, 28 December 1962; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to District Commissioner, N.T., 22 November 1962; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Luddington to Woo, 12 December 1962; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to Luddington, 8 January 1963; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, D.C.T.P to D.C.N.T., 9 April 1963; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Director of Immigration, 23 April 1963; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to Luddington, 18 March 1963; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to Luddington, 17

took the Liaison Office anywhere from a few months to a year to resolve even the simplest of cases as Woo was preoccupied with his work with the Students' Office and with important visits from British and Hong Kong government officials. such as Director of Education, G.P.

Ferguson's visit to Hong Kong in the fall of 1962 to discuss the re-employment of students who had just returned to Hong Kong after receiving a British post-secondary education.²³⁴ In the first few years of the Liaison Office's existence the Liaison Officer had very little time and ability to do his liaison work due to his commitment to the Students' Office, which was deemed a higher priority by the HKGO. As such, the Liaison Office left little impact on Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

On 8 February 1964, the Tai Po Rural Committee submitted a petition to G.C.M. Lupton, the local District Officer, calling on the Hong Kong government to hire additional officers in the Liaison Office in London in order to as to better support New Territories youth employed in Britain. The petition noted that almost ten thousand New Territories young villagers had left the colony to work in the metropole. The Tai Po Rural Committee was well aware that the Liaison Office was understaffed.²³⁵ The Tai Po Rural Committee's petition was supported by Assistant Colonial Secretary J.T. Wakefield's report on the financial and long-term economic forecast for

May 1963; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Director of Immigration, 20 May 1963; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Collace to Woo, 31 May 1963.

²³⁴ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Education to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 9 October 1962; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretariat to Director of Education, 25 October 1962; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Commissioner of Labour to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 12 October 1962; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Visit of Mr. G.P. Ferguson Suggested Programme, 1-2.

²³⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Petition from Chairman and Vice Chairman of Tai Po Rural Committee, 8 February 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, D.C., T.P. to D.C., N.T., 15 February 1964; and D.D.C.N.T. to D.O.T.P., 20 February 1964.

the prosperity of Britain's Chinese restaurant trade which noted that the Liaison Office was slow to respond to legal and personal matters between migrants and their families in Hong Kong.²³⁶

Despite these concerns and recommendations, nothing was done to increase Liaison Office personnel for another year. In October 1965, Mr. Victor Chann, the newly appointed full-time Assistant Liaison Officer, arrived in London on secondment for three years from the New Territories Administration.²³⁷ Chann was well versed in English and Chinese, and his previous post in Hong Kong proved he could quickly adapt himself to the work of the Liaison Office with efficiency and confidence. Chann's appointment was credited as most opportune by Woo and by G.P. Ferguson, Advisor to Hong Kong Students.²³⁸ Although the Liaison Office's services improved with the addition of Chann, the work of the office was by no means satisfactory. Chann's duties included assisting the Liaison Officer in interviewing people who called the office, dealing with Chinese correspondence, assisting in clerical duties, translating documents, and maintaining contacts with main employment centres throughout Britain.²³⁹ Chann also assumed the clerical work previously performed by staff from Students' Office even though his time would have been better utilized in liaison work. What work the Liaison Office did accomplish was primarily confined to London. From 1965 to 1968, Woo visited ethnic Chinese communities outside London infrequently. Chann had only travelled outside of London ten times during that same period. And yet, in the Liaison Office's half-yearly report in 1966, Woo argued

²³⁶ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 25 September 1963; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Secretary for Chinese Affairs, 27 September 1963; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretary to Wakefield, 15 October 1963; and HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, 7.

²³⁷ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, The Future of the Hong Kong Government's Agencies in London, A Report by Mr. W.V. Dickinson, August 1968: 14-15; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Ferguson to Walden, 19 October 1965.

²³⁸ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office, London: Half Yearly Report, 31 March 1966; and NT 1/2120/62c, Ferguson to Walden, 19 October 1965.

²³⁹ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office, London: Half Yearly Report, 31 March 1966; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6.

that employing additional clerical staff was unnecessary. It is probable that the HKGO budget did not have enough funds to hire more staff.²⁴⁰

On 1 March 1965, the Colonial Secretary and the Liaison Office agreed that a booklet about the Liaison Office was needed to introduce the Office to the ethnic Chinese in Britain. A draft was prepared by the end of the summer of 1965 in conjunction with the Liaison Office, the Hong Kong government's Labour Department, Immigration Department, police force, and the District Offices of the New Territories Administration. The pamphlet included information on different employment vouchers and how and where to get one, and what travel documents (for both workers and dependents) were required to enter Britain, such as passports and a certificate of identity. The pamphlet also contained information on Britain's accommodations and conditions of employment, and on currency exchange and income tax requirements. It also covered access to British social benefits, including family allowances, free education, free medical attention, sickness benefits, federal assistance, and old age pensions. Finally, the pamphlet informed potential migrants on how to send remittance back to Hong Kong, shared recognized holidays in Hong Kong and Britain, offered useful Hong Kong government contacts in Britain, and provided details on the language barriers many ethnic Chinese workers would face in Britain.²⁴¹ A Chinese translation of the original English pamphlet was not completed until late November 1965.²⁴²

Owing to further edits and publishing problems at the Hong Kong Government Printer, the publication of the pamphlet was delayed another seven months and did not appear until June

²⁴⁰ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office, London: Half Yearly Report, 30 September 1966.

²⁴¹ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office: Pamphlet, 1965.

²⁴² HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 19 November 1965; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretariat to Director of Immigration, 7 September 1965; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Education to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 4 August 1965; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Immigration to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 1 October 1965.

1966. Remarkably, many ethnic Chinese emigrants in Britain did not receive a copy of this pamphlet until December 1967 when they were visited by the Heung Yee Kuk delegation and David Lai, the Hong Kong government administrator.

In June 1966, the District Commissioner of the New Territories raised the idea of using the BBC to broadcast Chinese programs in Britain. However, Mr. Price, the Director of Broadcasting, deemed the BBC would be unlikely to pursue such a request as the community's population was too small. Price believed the BBC could justify its Hindi broadcasts on Sundays because the Indian/Pakistani communities were larger.²⁴³ By the time of the Hong Kong Leftist Riots and the 1967 Lai investigation, the Liaison Office had done a poor job of promoting itself and its services to the ethnic Chinese community owing to its personnel restraints and lack of funding.

The financial difficulties of the Liaison Office are readily apparent. In a summary of activities between October 1965 and December 1967, the Office reported it dealt with twenty-seven passport applications for passports, thirteen British re-entry certificate applications, thirty-seven passport renewal applications, thirty-eight applications for extensions of stay in Britain, 250 applications for family admissions into Britain, forty-five visa applications to Hong Kong, forty-one statutory declarations, and eighty-one land matter cases.²⁴⁴ As such, the Liaison Office could only render minimum services due to the shortage of staff and its fixed location in London. The Liaison Office was so taken up by individual requests for assistance that it scarcely had time to deal with any systemic problems the ethnic Chinese communities were facing across Britain.

²⁴³ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Broadcasting to Hon. District Commissioner, New Territories, 20 May 1966.

²⁴⁴ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, Summary of Cases Dealt with by the Liaison Office in the Period from October 1965 to December 1967.

There was no attempt to rectify the Liaison Office's staffing problem by the Hong Kong government. Indeed, the Liaison Office's personnel did not increase until 1968. Before the 1967 Leftist Riots, the British and Hong Kong governments believed there was no need to strengthen or reorganize the functions of the Liaison Office. Instead, the primary responsibilities of the HKGO were to commerce and industry, with the work of the Liaison Office deemed secondary. Liaison Officer Woo never made a request for an additional staff member even though, in 1964, for instance, he struggled to keep up with the dozens of inquiries into the office.²⁴⁵ Despite Woo's hard work, for which he was given praise,²⁴⁶ his other responsibilities with the Students' Office meant that he would take weeks to respond and correspond with the various government departments before he could answer and resolve the initial inquiry. Woo had next to no time to travel outside of London, so he had to rely on mail and personal contacts to reach out to the ethnic Chinese migrants living across Britain. A disinterested Hong Kong government combined with an agent who made no complaints resulted in little change in the structure or policy of the Liaison Office. The Liaison Office was a non-entity for the majority of Britain's ethnic Chinese populace.²⁴⁷

Although the HKGO expanded its services throughout the 1950s and 1960s to include the Information Section, the Students' Office, the Hong Kong House, and the Liaison Office, the HKGO remained aloof from Britain's ethnic Chinese community. While the Liaison Office provided consular-style care for ethnic Chinese migrants from 1962-1966, its feeble attempts at

²⁴⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Wakefield to Woo, 3 September 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to Bristow, 21 August 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to Bristow, 10 July 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to District Officer, Tai Po, 19 August 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to District Commissioner, 3 September 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to Bristow, 14 July 1964; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Woo to District Officer, New Territories, 22 July 1964; Woo to Lupton, 13 March 1964; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Wiggham to Woo, 11 August 1964.

²⁴⁶ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Wakefield to Woo, 27 August 1964.

²⁴⁷ Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 7.

providing assistance were minor compared to the efforts of the Chinese Mission. As such, the HKGO, and to an extent, the British and Hong Kong governments, had left themselves vulnerable to the complex interplay of middle transnational influences from grassroots movements and state actors who showed a greater readiness and ability to aid the ethnic Chinese migrants in the metropole.

The Role of the Chinese Mission

Lai's survey highlighted that, for over ten years, the Chinese Mission had supported Britain's ethnic Chinese community, cultivating goodwill and legitimacy towards Communist China.²⁴⁸ When the CCP came to power in 1949, it inherited China's policy towards the Overseas Chinese (*Huáqiáo*, 華僑). By assuming responsibility for Overseas Chinese, the CCP committed the PRC to regions such as Southeast Asia. By inheriting previous policy, the CCP also had to contend with the previous KMT nationality law which had engendered little trust amongst the overseas community. The CCP was also left to deal with the lack of assimilation by Overseas Chinese in their respective host societies which had consistently created tension between Chinese migrants and non-Chinese citizens. Therefore, one of the PRC's first solutions to the Overseas Chinese problem was eliminating dual nationality.²⁴⁹ The PRC continued the KMT tradition of encouraging the Overseas Chinese to contribute remittances to the mainland. As a result, from 1950-1957, Overseas Chinese sent US\$1.17 billion in remittances through Hong Kong and, to a lesser extent Macau. Both Hong Kong and Macau were necessary intermediaries to ensure remittances bypassed the United States blockade. The PRC taxed these

²⁴⁸ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 51-52.

²⁴⁹ Stephen Fitzgerald, *China and the Overseas Chinese: A Study of Peking's Changing Policy 1949-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 9-11.

remittances through direct form of taxation and used the revenue to repay its loans to the Soviet Union.²⁵⁰

With the 1966 Cultural Revolution policy on Overseas Chinese communities became subordinate to the domestic agenda. Returned Overseas Chinese were treated with suspicion by the Red Guards due to their allegedly bourgeois background, foreign connections, and perceived past preferential treatment. Under the Cultural Revolution, the PRC became a “revolutionary bastion against imperialism, revisionism, and all reactionaries.”²⁵¹ Red Guards attacked the Overseas Chinese for their “capitalist” and “bourgeois” nature. Their property was seized, and the Overseas Chinese stores and supplementary ration coupon stations were closed in August 1966. In January 1967, revolutionary rebels in Fujian and Hubei provinces attacked the Central Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission for supposedly following a “bourgeois reactionary line.”²⁵² The attacks led to the Commission’s decline in power.

The Cultural Revolution ignited communist fervour among certain members of the ethnic Chinese in neighbouring Southeast Asian nations. While there is no evidence to suggest that Beijing directed Overseas Chinese to overthrow Southeast Asian governments, a number of radicalized Chinese migrants attempted to export the Cultural Revolution. Whether justified or not, many Southeast Asian governments viewed their ethnic Chinese populations with suspicion and perceived them as a “fifth column.” As a result, violence involving local ethnic Chinese populations erupted across Southeast Asia in the mid to late 1960s. Scholars having primarily focused on radical movements in Indonesia (1965), Burma (1967), and Cambodia (1967).

²⁵⁰ Paul J. Bolt, *China and Southeast Asia’s Ethnic Chinese: State and Diaspora in Contemporary Asia* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 44.

²⁵¹ Michael B. Yahuda, *Towards the End of Isolationism: China’s Foreign Policy after Mao* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 35.

²⁵² TNA, FCO 95/40, China Topics: Treatment of Overseas Chinese during the Cultural Revolution, March 30, 1967.

Relations between the PRC and Indonesia were strained following the failed communist coup in 1965 and the subsequent widespread persecution of Indonesia's ethnic Chinese. Suharto's military coup in March 1967 and the launch of the Cultural Revolution only exacerbated the suspicion towards the Indonesian Chinese. Diplomatic relations were suspended between the PRC and Indonesia in October 1967. The once close Sino-Burmese links began to crumble in May 1967 when the Burmese government restricted the distribution of Maoist icons such as Mao badges and the Little Red Book, resulting in violence and anti-Chinese riots a month later. Finally, Cambodia also faced extreme Maoist activities. Prince Sihanouk's (1941-1955 and 1993-2004) supported the PRC's Cultural Revolution even as he privately despised it. By May 1967, the Cambodian government began suppressing pro-Maoist dissidence, further straining Sino-Cambodian relations.²⁵³

During the 27 November 1967 meeting between Lai and the Kuk, Pang Fu-wah, the Kuk Chairman until mid-1968, warned Lai and the Hong Kong government that the Chinese Mission in London was more influential among Britain's ethnic Chinese community than the Liaison Office. Pang and Wong Chun-wai, Chairman of Sai Kung (North) Rural Committee, both of whom had personal contacts among restaurateurs and owned Chinese restaurants in Britain, noted that the Liaison Office was understaffed.²⁵⁴ They suggested that the Liaison Office should be partly staffed by members of the Kuk since ethnic Chinese migrants from the New Territories would feel more comfortable receiving support from the Kuk rather than from government officials. Clearly, this proposal was an attempt by the Kuk to assert its influence upon the Liaison Office and outmanoeuvre the colonial government's authority in Britain. Lai ignored the Kuk's

²⁵³ Van Ness, *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy*, 222; Ma, *Wàijiāo bù wéngé jìshí*; and C.Y. Chang, "Overseas Chinese in China's Policy," *The China Quarterly*, no. 82 (1980): 281-288.

²⁵⁴ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. S.C.A., November 21, 1967; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T., June 10, 1968.

proposal in his survey but agreed that the Liaison Office was understaffed and was being upstaged by the Chinese Mission.²⁵⁵

The Chinese Mission's ten-year influence upon Britain's ethnic Chinese community, coincides with the period when Huan Xuang and Xiong Xianghui were the chargé d'affaires. Undoubtedly, Huan and Xiong's original mission in London was to improve stagnating Anglo-Chinese relations and secure continued remittance back to the PRC from the Britain's ethnic Chinese population. The Mission did not need to secure support for PRC policy from all Britain's ethnic Chinese migrants so long as they continued to send remittances and remained opposed to the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek.²⁵⁶ Pro-KMT associations in Britain had already declined by the late 1940s; Taiwan's Free Chinese Centre could not match the funding and propaganda of the PRC's Chinese Mission.²⁵⁷ Likewise, it was apparent that the Chinese Mission was far more effective than the British or Hong Kong governments in rendering aid to ethnic Chinese in need. For instance, in 1966, prior the launch of the Cultural Revolution, a Hong Kong Chinese sailor approached the HKGO for help in returning to Hong Kong after being dismissed from a Norwegian ship without repatriation arrangements. When the HKGO declined to help, the seaman reached out to the Chinese Mission. The Mission quickly contacted the shipping company's agent in Bristol and the Norwegian Consulate in Hong Kong and successfully procured the dismissed sailor a hotel and a fully refunded air ticket back to Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government acknowledged that the Chinese Mission had provided the necessary "push" to compel the shipping company to cover the dismissed sailor's return home.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. S.C.A., November 21, 1967; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T., June 10, 1968; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 8.

²⁵⁶ Oyen, "Communism, Containment, and the Chinese Overseas," 69-70; Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors*, 98-99; and HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 20.

²⁵⁷ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 246-247.

²⁵⁸ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 20-21; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 8.

The Chinese Mission also cultivated relationships with Britain's Hong Kong student population. The size of the Hong Kong student population had grown since the end of the Second World War to over four thousand students by early 1968. The Hong Kong students who sought higher education in Britain were mindful that being born in Hong Kong made them natural subjects and holders of British passports. They were also fully aware that the British public recognized them as ethnic Chinese, and not as British subjects. Most Hong Kong students were not communists and had no desire to return to the PRC. However, many held a patriotic view of the PRC and felt a sense of pride for recent Chinese achievements. They were also sympathetic to the leftist cause in Hong Kong. The Chinese Mission helped to cultivate PRC patriotism among Britain's ethnic Chinese students. In one instance, Mission representatives visited students in Sheffield. Sheffield police requested the itinerary in advance and the Mission outlined that the purpose of the visit was to discuss trade. They were denied the opportunity to contact the students directly. However, this did not prevent the students from visiting the Chinese Mission in London to discuss political matters regarding the PRC and Hong Kong.²⁵⁹ Furthermore, Hong Kong officials reported with some concern that many ethnic Chinese youth in Britain were imbued with a "Great Nation" spirit after the PRC's successful explosion of a hydrogen bomb.²⁶⁰

The PRC developed an extensive transnational network that linked Hong Kong with significant Chinese immigrant communities. The Chinese Mission and the NCNA office branch in London were able to contact and, in most cases, provide aid to Britain's ethnic Chinese. The Hong Kong government found that the Chinese Mission was adept at disseminating media and

²⁵⁹ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 33-36.

²⁶⁰ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Notes on the Discussion between Mr. H.T. Woo, Head of the H.K. Chinese Liaison Office and Staff of the New Territories Administration, 21 August 1967: 1-3.

propaganda material, as well as providing consular-style care for Britain's ethnic Chinese population.²⁶¹ Lai conceded that the Chinese Mission showed a greater readiness to help the ethnic Chinese migrants than the HKGO, which had left itself vulnerable to the Mission's initiatives. Therefore, the Chinese Mission, at the expense of the British and Hong Kong governments, took every measure to aid and care for Britain's ethnic Chinese community. They did so to secure remittance to the mainland and to create the impression that the PRC was not as malevolent as Western media tried to portray.

The Kuk's and Lai's Recommendations for Hong Kong government and Impact

On 28 March 1968, with the Kuk's goodwill tour complete, the Kuk delegation held finally meetings with Secretary of State Thomson and Lord Shepherd. During these meetings, the delegation presented a memorandum detailing the many problems faced by Britain's ethnic Chinese. The Kuk recommended three reforms in the Hong Kong colony to improve governance that would, in turn, receive favourable impression by Britain's ethnic Chinese community. First, the Kuk recommended that Chinese, alongside English, become the official language of Hong Kong. Chinese, the Kuk argued, should be used simultaneously at all formal meetings and in official government correspondence.²⁶² While there had been no law officially designating English as Hong Kong's sole official language, since 1840, Hong Kong government officials and businessmen from Britain spoke English, with a Eurasian middle stratum playing the role of mediators between English and Chinese speakers.²⁶³ Cantonese was the primary language for the bulk of Hong Kong's inhabitants, especially in the New Territories. The Kuk's suggestion would make it far easier for Hong Kong's Cantonese-speaking inhabitants to communicate and express

²⁶¹ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 20-23; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 8.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Carroll, *Edge of Empires*.

their views to the government. Secondly, the Kuk recommended that an appropriate reform following the 1967 Leftist Riots would be to provide one or two additional elected seats to representatives of the New Territories on the Executive and Legislative councils. The colonial government, continued the Kuk, should also hire more local Hong Kong Chinese in civil service positions.²⁶⁴ This was an important reform that would address both a lack of democracy and the impression of the Hong Kong government as an alien entity.²⁶⁵

Finally, the Kuk's third recommendation was for a land policy reform in the New Territories. Since 1842, the Hong Kong government had involved itself in all aspects of land development in the colony and had become the defacto landlord of vast swaths of land. Even before the Second World War, Hong Kong faced a housing crisis and inadequate land release. After the war, the massive influx of refugees from the PRC only exacerbated Hong Kong's housing crisis.²⁶⁶ From 1950-1964, the number of squatters throughout Hong Kong has been estimated to range from 250,000-650,000. Squatters lived in shanty housing built illegally on Crown Land.²⁶⁷ Despite the relaxation of plot ration controls in the 1950s and the construction of large tenet buildings to cope with the influx of mainland Chinese refugees, the Hong Kong government continued to release land for lease slowly, which frustrated the economy and the development of the New Territories.²⁶⁸ The Kuk argued that if the Hong Kong government did not institute land reform it would only provide further ammunition to communist agitators. The Kuk argued for higher compensation to property owners when usurping land for development.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 80-81.

²⁶⁵ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 248; Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 4-5; and Author, (Title omitted for blind review) (2021), 3.

²⁶⁶ Lawrence Wai-chung Lai, *Town Planning in Hong Kong: A Critical Review* (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 1997), 20-21; Hayes, *The Great Difference*, 32-34; Roger Bristow, *Land-Use Planning in Hong Kong: History, Policies, and Procedures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 57-58.

²⁶⁷ Alan Smart, *The Shek Yip Mei Myth: Squatters, Fires, and Colonial Rule in Hong Kong, 1950-1963* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), 12-19.

²⁶⁸ Lai, *Town Planning in Hong Kong*, 52-55.

For example, the Kuk critiqued the government's practice of force purchasing land from an owner for HK\$0.90 per square foot when the owner had purchased the land for HK\$10-20 per square foot. Likewise, the Kuk argued that the premium charged by the government for converting land from one specified purpose to another (for example, agriculture to industry) needed to be lowered. Finally, the Kuk stated that the government should remove restrictions on private development plans. One cited example was in Fanling, where private development had been delayed by red-tape for twenty years.²⁶⁹ While the Kuk was interested in developing the New Territories, it also believed that by encouraging development the colonial government would go a long way to shoring up political loyalty from its citizens and from those who had migrated to Britain's Chinatowns.

On the evening of 22 February 1968, the Kuk delegation met at the HKGO for their follow-up meeting with Lord Shepherd, and members of the HKGO and Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), to share their policy ideas pertaining to outreach within the New Territories and Britain's Chinatowns. Pang restated to Shepherd the Kuk's desire to see the appointment of unofficial New Territories representatives to the Hong Kong Executive and Legislative Councils. Pang argued that this would be an important democratic correction in the wake of the 1967 Leftist Riots. In spite of the Kuk's request for deeper public participation, Shepherd responded that Hong Kong could not introduce parliamentary democracy. Although Shepherd clarified that he did not oppose democracy in Hong Kong, he believed that democratic reform would only antagonize the PRC in the leadup to the 1997 handover. Shepherd assured the Kuk that the British were receptive to gradual reforms to ensure the continued safety of Hong Kong. The Kuk delegation acknowledged the complexity of British colonial rule over Hong

²⁶⁹ HKRPO, HAD 2/90/62: 81-83; and TNA, FCO 30/131, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs to Officer Administering the Government of Hong Kong, 28 March 1968

Kong meant that Hong Kong would not be another colony granted its own independence. The discussion ended with an agreement that gradual reforms would be introduced in Hong Kong and that such efforts would help shore up the political loyalty of Britain's ethnic Chinese community.²⁷⁰

With their mission complete, the Kuk awaited the 16 April 1968 release of David Lai's findings from his survey of conditions in Britain's Chinatowns, but nonetheless played a pivotal role in the New Territories during and in the immediate aftermath of the 1967 Leftist Riots. The Kuk organized patrols in rural areas to protect villagers from the Struggle Committee. Kuk patrols limited protests and created stability.²⁷¹ The New Territories district office, co-opted by leading members of the Kuk, proved to be sensitive to the aspirations, demands, and grievances of the local population.²⁷² In appreciation, the Hong Kong government offered more power to the Kuk's unofficial members of the Legislative Council when debating public grievances.²⁷³ Although the government did not meet the Kuk's request to increase the number of seats in the New Territories, granting their unofficial representatives greater power in the Legislative Council was significant. In addition, in 1968, the Colonial Secretary announced the formation of ten new Kuk-led district offices, six in Kowloon and four in Hong Kong Island, to serve as conduits between the colonial government and the local population. This was the first step in transforming the old-fashioned Crown colony system into a modern administration capable of responding to public opinion. In 1982, under Governor Murray MacLehose, and with Kuk

²⁷⁰ TNA, FCO 30/131, Notes of a Discussion held in the HKGO, 22 February 1968: 1-6.

²⁷¹ Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 69.

²⁷² Ian Scott, *Political Change and the Crisis of Legitimacy in Hong Kong* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), 108.

²⁷³ Loh, *Underground Front*, 117; and Scott, *Political Change and the Crisis of Legitimacy in Hong Kong*, 113-117.

support, the district offices were transformed into district boards, leading to an increase in Kuk-held elected seats.²⁷⁴

Although it took a number of years, the 1967 Leftist Riots, the disturbances in Britain's Chinatowns, and the Kuk's role in placating both, led to the Hong Kong government acceding to the Kuk's request to adopt Chinese Cantonese as an official Hong Kong language in 1974.²⁷⁵

The Kuk were even more successful in influencing land development policy in the New Territories post-1967. In the aftermath of the riots, the Hong Kong government launched another stage of new-town developments in rural areas. The private property market rebounded in 1968-1969. In 1969 the annual Crown land sales program was reinstated, spurring development projects in Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin, and Tuen Mun. That said, government housing projects were primarily concentrated in the urban harbour area. This changed when the Kuk successfully lobbied the Hong Kong government to enact the Small House Policy in 1972. The Small House Policy promised housing for 1.2 million people in the New Territories. Under the policy, indigenous male villagers who could trace their patrilineal line back to a 1898 New Territories resident were entitled to one concessionary land grant to build a three-storey house of up to 700 square feet.²⁷⁶ Because the land grants could be transferred from indigenous villagers to property developers, leaders of the Kuk benefited from the Small House Policy and actually consolidated their power over land development in the region. The Small House Policy created numerous problems that persist to this day, but in the 1970s it was considered a necessary reform to help shore up support from the Kuk and, in turn, the residents of the New Territories and ethnic Chinese migrants in

²⁷⁴ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 190-191; and Hayes, *The Great Difference*, 164

²⁷⁵ Lam Wai-man, *Understanding the Political Culture of Hong Kong: The Paradox of Activism and Depoliticization* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 126-135

²⁷⁶ D.J. Dwyer, "Land Use and Regional Planning Problems in the New Territories of Hong Kong," *The Geographical Journal* 152, no. 2 (1986): 235.

Britain.²⁷⁷ In conclusion, the British and Hong Kong governments rewarded the Kuk for their support during and after the 1967 Leftist Riots. The Kuk was granted official visits with Hong Kong officials in 1973 and 1977 where they lobbied for greater “clout” with the District Administer, New Territories, and for greater compensation for Kuk-owned land earmarked for development. Likewise, the Kuk’s support for the Hong Kong government was rewarded with the drafting of paragraph two, Annex III of the Joint Declaration that details the right of lessee before 1997 may extend their leased period up until June 30, 2047.²⁷⁸

Lai’s survey revealed that the years of British and Hong Kong government indifference to the residents in Britain’s Chinatowns were a key factor that allowed for Hong Kong’s 1967 Leftist Riots to spill over into ethnic Chinese emigrant communities in the metropole. Lai’s report was critical of the limited capacity of the HGKO’s Liaison Office. Lai reported that the office operated on the principle that assistance be given when it is sought, which meant that the office did not play an active role engaging with Britain’s ethnic Chinese community, making it unknown to most residents. During his tour, Lai reported his surprised that during his tour very few of the ethnic Chinese population were aware of the Liaison Office and, of those who were, few knew of its functions and activities. He noted the delay and poor circulation of the Liaison’s outreach pamphlet. He also reported a common complaint had been the Liaison Office’s delay in granting support to workers wishing to bring their wives and children to join them in Britain.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁷ Bristow, *Land-Use Planning in Hong Kong*, 244-247; and Kent Ewing, “Scrap the Heung Yee Kuk: An out-of-touch mafia-like anachronism hindering Hong Kong’s development,” *Hong Kong Free Press*, 19 September 2016, <https://hongkongfp.com/2016/09/19/scrap-the-heung-yee-kuk-an-out-of-touch-mafia-like-anachronism-hindering-hong-kongs-development/>.

²⁷⁸ Hayes, *The Great Difference*, 164; Roger Nissim, *Land Administration and Practice in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008), 122; Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, *The Joint Declaration: Annex III*, July 1, 1997.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 7-11.

Lai identified several concerns with the efficacy of the Liaison Office. First, while he credited Woo for the work he did accomplish part-time and on a £20 monthly honorarium, Lai believed the Office deserved a full-time officer. Twelve hours per week was barely sufficient to deal with the demands of the Office. In addition to a full-time leadership position, Lai also believed the Liaison Office needed more part-time and clerical support to free up the time of Woo and Chann so they could make pro-active interventions in Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Lai's third contention was that the Liaison Office was grossly under-advertised among the people it sought to serve, especially ethnic Chinese residing outside of London. Communications between the Hong Kong government and the Liaison Office were also inadequate, reported Lai.²⁸⁰

Lai suggested that both the location and the name of the Liaison Office needed to be reconsidered. Lai believed the Liaison Office should be located under the same roof as the Students' Office and the HKGO to support greater coordination among HKGO personnel. At the time of Lai's survey, the Liaison Office and the Students' Office were located in the Abbey House, Victoria Street. The Liaison Office was tucked out of the way and difficult to locate for most ethnic Chinese workers, unlike the publicly accessible HKGO on Pall Mall.

Lai's report went into detail describing the Liaison Office. Lai described it as not giving the impression of a government establishment, but rather resembled an outdated hospital with green painted walls. He characterized it as clinical, remote, cold, and secluded. The office lacked an enquiry desk. Woo's and Ferguson's offices were in poor condition, giving the impression that the Liaison Office and the Students' Office were of lesser importance than the HKGO. Lai recommended a new name, as many of the ethnic Chinese mistook it for a commercial or travel

²⁸⁰ Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 7.

service agency. Lai's report also exposed the Liaison Office's annual budget as being less than £5,000, comprising: £685 for rent, £300 for transportation, £220 for utilities, £14 for repairs, £86 for contingencies, £51 for national insurance, and £3,504 for personal emoluments. The Liaison Office's budget was a tenth of the HKGO's estimated annual expenditure of £50,000. These sums indicate that offering support to ethnic Chinese workers in Britain was a minor priority for the British and Hong Kong governments compared to advancing the HKGO's industrial and commercial interests.²⁸¹

Lai concluded that the HKGO and its separate offices lacked coordination both between each other and among other Hong Kong government agencies and that the work of the Liaison Office failed to receive priority. He hinted that the HKGO needed a thorough restructuring in order to effectively provide aid to Britain's ethnic Chinese population effectively.²⁸²

As a result of his survey, Lai wrote to J.R. Locking, District Officer of Yuen Long J.R. Locking in February 1968 to discuss the potential replacement of Victor Chann in the Liaison Office. Back on 20 October 1967, the office of the District Commissioner of the New Territories had blocked an extension to Chann's secondment and suggested that a more junior officer could replace Chann as his expertise was needed back in Hong Kong.²⁸³ Lai believed Chann should stay in London. Lai thought Chan's experience as an interpreter and translator, and his fluency in English and Chinese made him ideally suited to the work of the Liaison Office. While Lai was critical of the Liaison Office, he had only good things to say about Chann and H.T. Woo. If Chann had to be replaced, wrote Lai, his replacement should be an ethnic Chinese male, between the age of 30-40, with the ability to read, write, and speak English, Cantonese, and Hakka. The

²⁸¹ Ibid.; and HKRPO, HAD 2/90/62: 11-15.

²⁸² HKRPO, HAD 2/90/62: 62-63.

²⁸³ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretariat to Hon. District Commissioner, N.T., 6 March 1968; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Established Officer, 21 March 1968.

candidate should also have experience as an officer in the Hong Kong government, a good reputation in the New Territories, and be a known anti-communist.²⁸⁴ In the end, the Colonial Secretariat agreed that Chann's secondment be extended by three years so he could remain in London.²⁸⁵

With the matter of Chann's employment settled, the office of the Colonial Secretariat circulated copies of Lai's report to each of the central departments of the Hong Kong government with details on how Lai's specific proposals would affect them. The central departments were directed to provide any feedback on Lai's report to W.V. Dickinson, Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary, who was charged with reviewing the future organization of Hong Kong government's agencies in London. Lai's report was sent to the departments of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Director of Commerce and Industry, the District Commissioner of the New Territories, the Commissioner of Labour, the Director of Education, the Police Commissioner, the Director of Information Services, and the Director of Immigration. Officials in these government departments agreed with Lai that the Liaison Office in London needed to be strengthened and recommended that the HKGO be consolidated in order to improve the colonial governments relationship with the ethnic Chinese workers in Britain and to counter the assistance afforded by the Chinese Mission. Aware that reforms were necessary in the wake of the Leftist Riots, the government departments approved Lai's recommendation for an increase in funding for the Liaison office to support its services and expanded personnel. Many of the

²⁸⁴ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Contracts from a Personal Letter from D. Lai to J.R. Locking, 28 February 1968: 1-4; and "Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch: List of Members," *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 8, 1968: 211.

²⁸⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Established Officer, 25 April 1968; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretariat to Hon. District Commissioner, N.T., 25 July 1968; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 10.

departments expressed concern over the ideological “edge” the Chinese Mission held over the British and Hong Kong governments and that all effort should be made to blunt its influence.²⁸⁶

On 18 June 1968, Governor David Trench instructed W.V. Dickinson to examine the various London-based agencies of the Hong Kong government with a view to their reorganization. Dickinson was a very able colonial administrator who had been stationed in Ghana when it gained its independence in 1957. In 1966, after pressure to make Hong Kong’s Urban Council more democratic and representative, Governor Trench appointed Dickinson to oversee a party of five members and a secretary to review the question of local government in Hong Kong. “Dickinson’s report” proposed the creation of three district councils to manage Hong Kong’s municipal affairs, with each council to be composed by a majority of elected officials. However, Governor Trench did not release the Dickinson report until February 1967, as the colonial administration remained leary of local democracy; a decision which was sorely tested by the Leftist Riots later that year.²⁸⁷ Given Dickinson’s previous report, it made sense that he was tasked with the restructuring of Hong Kong’s British offices. Dickinson initiated informal discussions with individual departmental officers from the Colonial Secretariat, Department of Commerce and Industry, Education Department, Immigration Department,

²⁸⁶ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretariat to See Below, 1 June 1968; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Information Services to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 18 June 1968; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Commissioner of Labour to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 28 June 1968; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Immigration to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 2 July 1968; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 10 June 1968; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Commissioner of Police to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 20 August 1968.

²⁸⁷ Chi-kwan Mark, “Development without Decolonisation? Hong Kong’s Future and Relations with Britain and China, 1967-1972,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, no.2 (2014): 330; Frederick Madden, ed., *The End of Empire: Dependencies Since 1948, Part 1: The West Indies, British Honduras, Hong Kong, Fiji, Cyprus, Gibraltar, and the Falklands* (Westport: Greenwood, 2000) 333-334; and Brian Hook, “From Repossession to Retrocession: British Policy towards Hong Kong 1945-1997,” in *Political Order and Power Transition in Hong Kong*, ed., Li Pang-kwong (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1997), 14-15.

Information Services Department, Secretariat for Chinese Affairs, and the Trade Development Council.²⁸⁸

Dickinson's report confirmed Lai's survey and reiterated the many issues Hong Kong's government agencies faced in Britain. Dickinson praised the detail and comprehensiveness of Lai's work. Ultimately, he concluded that the HKGO's four agencies suffered from overlapping functions and a lack of unified direction. He criticized the lack of a direct personal communication channel between the Hong Kong government and Whitehall. Departing from Lai's recommendations, Dickinson recommend the consolidation of all four agencies into a multi-purpose office. A unified office, argued Dickinson, could better coordinate communication between the different government agencies and the policy-directing institutions of the British and Hong Kong governments. Dickinson envisioned five distinct sections within the centralized office, covering commercial, information, liaison, student, and administrative matters. The commercial section would be responsible to the Department of Commerce and Industry and review the commercial, economic, and industrial developments in Britain and Hong Kong and liaise with government representatives, the Commonwealth Office, the British Trade Development Council, and the department's Director. Dickinson called for an increase in staff and funding for the Information Section to better present information requested by ethnic Chinese migrants and to produce materials that projected a favourable image of the Hong Kong government. The Students' Office, wrote Dickinson, would support the placement of British officers, support Hong Chinese students in British universities and colleges, arrange merit trips from Hong Kong, and advise students on any financial entitlements and how to claim them. Furthermore, he believed the Student Office should take over all the Ministry of Overseas

²⁸⁸ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, The Future Organization of the Hong Kong Government's Agencies in London, August 1968: 1 and 47.

Development responsibilities regarding the British training of Hong Kong government officers. As such, Dickinson recommended that the Hong Kong House continue to operate as a separate entity but under the authority of the Students' Office. Dickinson recommended that the Liaison Office, much like the Information Section, should receive more funding and staff to better serve the ethnic Chinese community in Britain. Finally, Dickinson recommended an administration section to handle all of the office's clerical and receptionist duties. Overall, these sections would report to the office head, who would be granted the temporary title of Agent-General, later changed to Commissioner, and given consular recognition and appropriate privileges so he could perform his representational role with the British government.²⁸⁹

Enacting Dickinson's recommendations required a significant expansion of officers with detailed knowledge and acquaintance with Hong Kong. These posts were to be filled by serving Hong Kong government officers for roughly three years, after which each officer would return to other duties in Hong Kong. Specific posts, such as clerical and librarian officers, were to be economically and effectively filled by personnel recruited in Britain. The HKGO expanded to include twenty-seven officers across the five sections.²⁹⁰ With the increased staff and functions of the various agencies, a single all-purpose government office in London proved desirable. The HKGO accommodation at 54 Pall Mall were inadequate, and the Liaison and Students' Offices were in dreadful condition. Therefore, it was recommended that the Hong Kong government arrange with the Trade Development Council to lease new London accommodations.²⁹¹

Dickinson prioritized the need to overhaul the operation of the Liaison Office. While the Office needed to continue to expand its ability to offer individual support and aid the ethnic

²⁸⁹ Ibid.: 20-40.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.: 40-43.

²⁹¹ Ibid.: 44-46.

Chinese emigrants in Britain, it also needed to take a proactive politicized role to disseminate a pro-Hong Kong, anti-communist message within Britain's Chinatowns. Dickinson agreed with Lai's assessment that the Liaison Office should be composed of a full-time Chinese, bilingual officer with a deep knowledge of the ethnic Chinese communities in Britain and Hong Kong. Dickinson believed the officer should be supported by five additional staff members. Dickinson also recommended that sub-offices be opened in Liverpool and Edinburgh.²⁹²

What distinguished Dickinson's report from Lai's, was the idea to combine all of Hong Kong's London-based agencies into a single organization, under an experienced administrative officer. Governor Trench supported Dickinson's position. He explained in a letter to Sir Arthur Galsworthy of the Commonwealth Office, that he intended to increase the responsibilities of Patrick Sedgwick, the current Director of the HKGO, so that Sedgwick could be empowered to speak authoritatively for the colony on a wide range of subjects. Governor Trench saw these reforms as necessary to ensure the flow of remittance to the New Territories and to improve the perception of the Hong Kong government among Britain's ethnic Chinese communities. Therefore, the Governor requested the British government's Commonwealth Office make a preliminary view of Dickinson's proposals and to reach a final agreement on enacting the necessary changes to Hong Kong's British offices by mid-October 1968.²⁹³

The Commonwealth Office's Policy and Planning Department (the Commonwealth Office eventually merged with the Foreign Office to become the FCO in 1968) agreed with the rationale for reorganization. However, the Commonwealth Office advised that in order to the reorganization to take place the representational role of the new Hong Kong government office needed to be clearly defined and follow constitutional and legal protocols. The transformation

²⁹² Ibid.: Recommendations, Appendix D; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 10-11.

²⁹³ The National Archives (hereafter TNA), FCO 49/123, Trench to Galsworthy, 14 August 1968

would also need to comport with legislation implemented under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations in terms of the functions, rights, and immunities accorded to consular officers and their offices.²⁹⁴ The main issue the Commonwealth Policy Department faced was that Hong Kong remained a colony and would never achieve independence. Initially, the Commonwealth Policy Department reviewed the precedent of Agent-General offices in London, including those of the Australian states and Canadian provinces wherein the officer in charge received the title of Agent-General and was granted full diplomatic privileges. They also reviewed the precedent of nations with London Commissions who received independence post-World War Two, including Gambia, Gold Coast, Nigeria, Malta, Malaysia, and Sierra Leone. The London offices of these nations were responsible for similar issues as those proposed by the new Hong Kong office, including commerce, publicity and information, welfare, and staff recruitment. These offices also received exemptions on duties. Unlike the Agents-General, Commissions were granted certain privileges on a Consular level once the country had moved towards independence and achieved internal self-government. Apart from these two categories of foreign government agencies in London were the unique Commissions of the Eastern Caribbean governments, which granted extended consular privilege to both Agents-General and Commissions in terms of commerce, tourism, and welfare with Britain.²⁹⁵

The matter of using a pre-existing Commonwealth agency title for the HKGO was more complex than it first appeared. The designation of an Agent-General was inappropriate because Hong Kong was still a colony that lacked the constituent parts of an independent Commonwealth government, like those in Australia or Canada. Likewise, the title of Commissioner was typically

²⁹⁴ Boleslaw A. Boczek, *International Law: A Dictionary* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005), 41-42.

²⁹⁵ TNA, FCO 49/123, Carter to Walker, 21 August 1968; Ibid., Cox to Ellis, 22 August 1968; Ibid., FCO 49/123; and Ibid., TNA, FCO 49/123, Ellis to Cox, 26 August 1968.

reserved for colonial countries that were either on their way to, or had just achieved, independence. The problem was a particularly contentious one as the members of the Commonwealth Policy and Planning Department sought to avoid antagonizing the PRC by granting the Hong Kong representative in London a title that might suggest a future independent Hong Kong. In 1958, PRC's Premier Zhou Enlai had already expressed opposition to Hong Kong transforming into a self-governing dominion like Singapore.²⁹⁶ Furthermore, Britain could not be seen as responding to the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots in a manner that might suggest they were planning to grant independence to the colony.²⁹⁷

There was also the thorny problem of the HKGO and whether its functions were politically "representational." In British diplomatic context, representational refers to the public and officially-recognized authority to represent a state on matters of state diplomacy. It would have been deemed unconstitutional for a representative of the colony of Hong Kong to represent London because the British government conducted Hong Kong's external relations. The only proper spokesman for Hong Kong outside the colony would have been the Secretary of State. The British-based Hong Kong agency's representation would be restricted within the closed administrative circuit concerned internal Hong Kong matters or those directly concerning its citizens at home or abroad. Therefore, the HKGO could have neither domestic nor international diplomatic recognition.²⁹⁸

Much of the Commonwealth's approval process was unduly onerous and superfluous. Both A.W. Gaminara, of the Hong Kong Department, and D.J. Mathias, of the Commonwealth

²⁹⁶ Ho-fung Hung, *City on the Edge: Hong Kong Under Chinese Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 120.

²⁹⁷ TNA, FCO 49/123, Carter to Walker, 21 August 1968; and TNA, FCO 49/123, Cox to Carter, 28 August 1968.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., Johnston, 29 August 1968; Ibid., Oxley to Cox, 30 August 1968; Ibid., Gaminara to Cox, 12 September 1968; and Ibid., Cox to Walker, 20 September 1968.

Policy and Planning Department, expressed a similar view that the mountain of labour that went into the approval of the HKGO reorganization was necessary.²⁹⁹

The matter of the reorganization was discussed between Commonwealth Policy and Planning Department and Governor Trench during his leave to London on 22-23 October 1968. It was agreed that there was no need to apply the misnomer of “representational” to the role of the amalgamated office as its Director would be performing the same responsibilities as they did before. The Director would continue to be in direct contact with British government authorities over matters of mutual concern to the British and Hong Kong governments. The Director would not be directly issuing policy except in conjunction with officials in the Commonwealth Office. While various titles for the new head of the HKGO were bandied around, including “Director,” “Agent,” and “Representative,” it was agreed the official title would be “Administrative Commissioner for the Government of Hong Kong in London.” Finally, all parties agreed the post would not bestow diplomatic immunities and privileges.³⁰⁰

The Commonwealth Office’s delay in approval of a reorganized HKGO was furthered by the Office’s research into similarities between the privileges and rights of the new Administrative Commissioner position and the British Trade Commissioner in the Bahamas (also a British colony at the time) and the British Trade Commissioner in Hong Kong. It was not until 24 March 1969, three months after Governor Trench’s British visit, that the Commonwealth Office received Trench’s message with the list of privileges granted to the British Trade Commissioner in Hong Kong. The privileges included Hong Kong and Commonwealth tax exemptions on personal or tenant properties, license tax and fuel rebates for government

²⁹⁹ Ibid., Mathias to Beattie, 16 October 1968; and TNA FCO 40/247, Gaminara to Carter, 24 January 1969.

³⁰⁰ TNA, FCO 49/123, Reorganisation of the Hong Kong Government Office in London, 22-23 October 1968: 1-7; and TNA, FCO 40/247, Extract from Record of Discussions, 22-23 October 1968.

vehicles, and a reduced duty tax on consumer goods for the office. Trench told the Commonwealth Office that the matter of HKGO privileges could have been considered after its general reorganization.³⁰¹

The delay in FCO approval came at the expense of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. The Liaison Office's half-yearly report on 14 October 1968 details how many ethnic Chinese migrants wrote letters to Woo requesting updates on changes to the Liaison Office, having followed the matter closely upon the completion of Lai's public tour and survey.³⁰² However, it would not be until August 1969 that the Hong Kong government formally announced its plans to reorganize the HKGO. On 15 May 1969, Trench informed the FCO that Alec Michael Wright would succeed Sedgwick as Director of the HKGO and become the first Administrative Commissioner on 1 September. Wright checked off all the requirements of the position: born in Hong Kong in 1912, at the time of his appointment Wright had served thirty years in Hong Kong's Public Works Department as well as an official member of the Legislative Council.³⁰³ While Trench has been criticized for begrudgingly introducing social reforms in Hong Kong, the importance he played in reorganizing the HKGO in London to better support Britain's ethnic Chinese community should not be overlooked.³⁰⁴

The HKGO's reorganization received quick approval from Hong Kong's Executive Council. A memorandum summarizing Dickinson's report was circulated on 31 July and the

³⁰¹ TNA, FCO 40/247, Gaminara to Carter, 24 January 1969; Ibid., Gaminara to Russell, 26 November 1968; and Ibid., Trench to Carter, 24 March 1969.

³⁰² HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Half-Yearly Report: April-September 1968.

³⁰³ TNA, FCO 40/247, Trench to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 15 May 1969; and *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, May 17, 1969, 7.

³⁰⁴ David Faure, "Rethinking Colonial Institutions, Standards, Life Styles, and Experiences," in *Hong Kong Mobile: Making a Global Population*, eds. By Helen F. Siu and Agnes S. Ku (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2008); Ray Yep, "The 1967 Riots in Hong Kong: The Diplomatic and Domestic Fronts of the Colonial Governor," *The China Quarterly* 193 (2008); and Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed*, 4-6.

proposed changes were approved in principle by the Executive Council on 5 August.³⁰⁵ The reorganization of the HKGO was formally declared on 20 August. The reorganized office would be under the supervision of Administrative Commissioner Wright. The office would coordinate the activities of the various departments of the British and Hong Kong governments, disseminate information about the colony, and provide consular-style care for Britain's ethnic Chinese residents. Department members Gaminara and Charles H. Godden stressed FCO's oversight to signal to the PRC that the reorganization was not a nefarious plan to set up a "third China."³⁰⁶ The reference to the FCO was a reciprocal gesture toward the ethnic Chinese to assure them that Britain planned to maintain the colonial rule of Hong Kong until the 1997 handover deadline and would not grant the colony independence. This was especially important to avoid further tension during the ongoing hostage crisis (Anthony Grey in the PRC, and the Hong Kong riot prisoners in the colony) and help normalize the two nations' relationship.³⁰⁷

On 20 August 1969, the various agencies of the HKGO ceased to operate as independent outposts of their departments in Hong Kong and were re-organized in a newly-acquired leased floor on Pall Mall. The HKGO now boasted a staff of 34, with most additional staff members serving as clerical officers.³⁰⁸ The Administrative Commissioner's title was simplified to Hong Kong Commissioner in 1972 under order of Governor MacLehose, as the title was no longer loaded with Cold War hostility.³⁰⁹ Under Hong Kong Commissioner Michael Wright, the HKGO changed course and significantly broadened its diplomatic mandate beyond commercial policy

³⁰⁵ Ibid., Memorandum for Executive Council, 31 July 1969.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., From the Governor, Hong Kong to The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 7 August 1969; Ibid., Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Hong Kong Government Office, 15 August 1969; and Ibid., Godden to Minister of State, 12 August 1969.

³⁰⁷ Chi-kwan Mark, *The Everyday Cold War: Britain and China, 1950-1972* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 159-160.

³⁰⁸ HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, Hong Kong Government Office, Quarterly report-October to December 1969, 4 February 1970; and HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, Attention Mr. K. Hahn, 6 July 1970.

³⁰⁹ TNA, FCO 40/395, Monson to Laird, 29 February 1972.

and the promotion of trade. HKGO expansion was deemed valuable to the Hong Kong government as a means to “establish close contacts with the Hong Kong people in Britain [and] to minimize the opportunity for communist indoctrination.”³¹⁰ The Liaison Office was particularly relieved by the addition of Mr. Cheung To-on, an experienced clerical officer. To-on freed up full-time assistant, Mr. V. Chann, so he could devote more of his time to travel to visit Britain’s ethnic Chinese communities and promote the office’s work in cities such as Birmingham, Southampton, and Brighton.³¹¹ By October-December 1969, the Liaison’s office’s output significantly increased. It received 217 visitors and 127 letters. It sent out 134 letters. By the end of 1970s, quarterly numbers had jumped to 273 outward letters and 631 letter or telephone inquiries.³¹² Total yearly in-person visits to the Liaison Office in London were roughly 1000 individuals. These numbers steadily increasing throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. The office relocated to yet another larger space on 6 Grafton Steet, London on 13 October 1972. Regional liaison office branches were established in the cities of Liverpool (late 1972), Manchester (September 1977), and Edinburgh (November 1977) to provide a broader range of aid and service to ethnic Chinese communities outside of London.³¹³

By the mid-1970s, the HKGO had achieved most of the reform objectives set out in Lai’s report and could boast of a staff of 120 staff members in its London and Liverpool offices. S.T. Kidd, the new Commissioner and former District Commissioner of the New Territories, was

³¹⁰ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, The Future Organization of the Hong Kong Government’s Agencies in London, August 1968: Appendix D.

³¹¹ HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, Hong Kong Government Office, Quarterly report-October to December 1969, 4 February 1970.

³¹² HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, Hong Kong Government Office, Quarterly report-October to December 1970.

³¹³ HKPRO, HKRS77-1-91, Report on the Hong Kong Government Office in London, August 1974; TNA, FCO 40/395, Kelly to Gardner, 7 August 1972; HKPRO, HKRS870-8-1932, Government Opens Manchester Branch Office, 21 September 1977; HKPRO, HKRS870-8-1932, HK Government’s Branch Office in Edinburgh Opened, 9 November 1977; and HKPRO, HKRS870-8-1932, Bristow to Heads of Departments, 30 October 1972; and Rawcliffe, “Turning a New Leaf,” 10-11.

largely responsible for the growth of the HKGO staff. Kidd championed the expansion of the HKGO's duties. The total annual cost of the new staff was £41,134, on top of the already existing expenses of £74,217. This figure increase to over £750,000 (HK\$6,500,000) by the end of 1977, due to the opening and hiring of additional staff in the Manchester and Edinburgh sub-offices. That fall, Commissioner Kidd retired and was replaced by Denis Bray.³¹⁴ The increase in HKGO annual operating expenses correlated with an increase in services offered to support ethnic Chinese community members and associations, including the maintenance of ties back to the New Territories. In doing so, it also won support of Britain's ethnic Chinese community towards the Hong Kong colonial government Both the British and Hong Kong governments sought stability for Britain's Chinatowns. HKGO expenditure increases were justified as a part of broader MacLehose-era reforms and served the important purpose of fostering a positive image of the colonial government.³¹⁵

Conclusion

Both the Kuk and Lai revealed that the British and Hong Kong governments' indifferent attitude towards the ethnic Chinese migrants was a key reason why unrest in Hong Kong spread to parts of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. In Hong Kong itself, there was no organized political life, little sense of social anchorage, or identification with the colonial regime. The Hong Kong government had kept up a tradition of spending as little as possible on its subject's social welfare and had refused the introduction of political or social reforms. Ethnic Chinese migrants in Britain felt a similar indifferent and uncaring attitude from both the Hong Kong and British as they settled into a new country and life. The community's transnational ties to Hong

³¹⁴ HKPRO, HKRS877-1-91, Report on the Hong Kong Government Office in London, Kidd, August 1974; and HKPRO, HKRS870-8-1932, House of Commons, 15 November 1976.

³¹⁵ Mark Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-92* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 144-145; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf,"

Kong kept in circulation the many grievances and frustrations Hong Kong Chinese and Britain's ethnic Chinese community held towards the British colonial authorities. In the absence of British and Hong Kong support, many ethnic Chinese migrants in Britain came to rely on welfare provided by the Chinese Mission. They came to the Chinese Mission because they knew it would help them and not out of any particularly strong Maoist convictions. Lai's survey revealed that the Chinese Mission in London had been working for more than ten years to win the goodwill and support of the ethnic Chinese in Britain. The ability of the Chinese Mission to act and address Britain's ethnic Chinese community's problems was an embarrassment to the British and Hong Kong governments. Colonial authorities were also concerned by how the ethnic Chinese community's problems were negatively affecting the flow of remittance.

The perception of the British and Hong Kong governments among Britain's ethnic Chinese communities was in need of an overhaul. Among the most ardent promoters of such an overhaul was Hong Kong's grassroots Kuk organization. The Kuk's mission had done much to arouse widespread interest among Britain's Chinatowns in the happenings of the colony. In turn, the Kuk helped reassure the community that the Hong Kong government had not forgotten them and would do everything to demonstrate a commitment to the ethnic Chinese's welfare and turn a new leaf in policy towards the New Territories, which in turn led to significant social development and gradual growing confidence of the people of the region. Lai's report called for increased expenditure and staffing for the HKGO's Liaison Office so it could better compete with the Chinese Mission and demonstrate the British and Hong Kong government's commitment to the well-being of Britain's ethnic Chinese migrant communities and stave off further unrest. The initial cost to re-organize all of Hong Kong's London-based government agencies was nearly £107,000. Of the many thousands of ethnic Chinese working in Britain, the

vast majority still regarded Hong Kong as their home. Therefore, the ultimate responsibility for their care and welfare rested on the British and Hong Kong governments. However, it was not until the 1967 Leftist Riots spread to Britain's Chinatowns and threatened the flow of remittance that colonial authorities decided to assume such responsibility.

Chapter Four- The Role of Newspapers and Propaganda

Lai's 1967-1968 survey revealed that the circulation of information and propaganda via newspapers was a significant factor in the spread of sympathy for the 1967 Leftist Riots in the British ethnic Chinese community. The press was an important medium for nations to exert their influence and ideologies and win over the "hearts and minds" of the people. Lai's survey revealed that the PRC's Communist press was better funded and distributed than print materials produced by and/or friendly to the British and Hong Kong governments. News produced by the PRC and Hong Kong Leftists circulated in Britain's ethnic Chinese communities and was left largely unchallenged by the British authorities. This left-leaning material promoted ideological editorials on the Cultural Revolution, Maoism, etc. but it was also offered left-wing analysis of local news; these reports did much to point out the many shortcomings of British rule in Hong Kong. Pro-colonial media lacked the robust sales and distribution of left-wing newspapers. Britain's ethnic Chinese emigrants found the left-wing press readily accessible and cheaper. Unlike pro-colonial papers, the left-wing press was written in Chinese, not English. Lai recommended that to counter Communist propaganda among Britain's ethnic Chinese migrants, the British and Hong Kong governments needed to reform their pro-colonial information services and newspaper offerings. The unrest in Britain's Chinatowns hammered home the need to counter pro-Communist news outlets and propaganda.

The first section of this chapter explores how the PRC's state media agency, the NCNA, along with its various international branches, played an important transnational role in disseminating PRC's state ideology and policies. The NCNA sought to influence Overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, and Britain, as well as among the British Left. The NCNA promoted the importance and success of Mao's Cultural Revolution. While

NCNA news was definitely read within Britain's ethnic Chinese communities, its readership held little ideological conviction towards Maoism, but they did prove receptive to NCNA reports that portrayed British and Hong Kong governments as uncaring and uninterested in the well-being of Chinese peoples in Hong Kong or the metropole. These anti-colonial critiques were accepted by many in Britain's ethnic Chinese community as many of its claims were true.

Next, this chapter will examine how Hong Kong Leftist newspapers influenced Britain's ethnic Chinese community in favour of the Hong Kong rioters' cause. Hong Kong-based newspapers gave prominent coverage of migrants and relatives in Britain and provided detailed descriptions of events in Britain's ethnic Chinatowns and the colony. These papers also spread the PRC's political policies while deemphasizing local non-political news. By the 1967 Leftist Riots, the British and Hong Kong governments had done little to fight the information Cold War; they did not have much in the way of Chinese-language publications to counter the circulation of Communist-friendly news.

The final section of this chapter will further Lai's contention that the popularity of left-leaning news in Britain's ethnic Chinese communities had more to do with its wide circulation and lack of Chinese-language anti-Communist alternatives, than any real attraction to the Cultural Revolution or Maoist ideas. Lai's report encouraged British and Hong Kong governments to increase funds to the HKGO's Information Section, and to fund and support existing Chinese-language papers friendly to the colonial government that would provide non-Communist coverage of local news. Lai's survey revealed to the British and Hong Kong governments the need to create and inform Britain's ethnic Chinese community on events taking place in Hong Kong from a pro-colonial viewpoint to stem the influence of the Chinese and left-wing press.

The Role of the PRC and the NCNA

The NCNA was established in April 1937 at the CCP headquarters in Yan'an as the official party mouthpiece to spread communist propaganda and local news. Liao Chengzhi 廖承志, the leading Cantonese official of the CCP, established a branch of the NCNA, under the guise of a tea business on Queen's Road, Hong Kong, in early 1938. The NCNA Hong Kong branch's purpose was to support the war effort in Guangdong province. By 1944, the branch produced both Chinese and English language broadcasts to appeal to foreign observers and residents in surrounding KMT-controlled regions near the colony. At the end of the Second World War, the British and Hong Kong governments accepted the NCNA's dissemination of news in the colony because even though it produced Communist propaganda it also promoted joint resistance to Japan. In turn, the NCNA recognized the value of the British colony as a neutral site during the Chinese Civil War. In May 1947, under the leadership of Qiao Guanhua 喬冠華, the NCNA promoted the CCP's military situation to a Hong Kong readership.³¹⁶ By 1947, the NCNA also headquartered the Hong Kong and Macau Work Committee, which answered to Liao Chengzhi, the head of China's External Affairs Office. The NCNA played an important role in the External Affairs Office's Hong Kong mandate to promote a united front policy to maintain the colony's status quo, foster patriotic sentiments and spread state propaganda, improve relations with Overseas Chinese communities, and cooperate with local capitalists to circumvent the economic blockade of the PRC by the United States.³¹⁷

³¹⁶ Cindy Yik-yi Chu, *Chinese Communists and Hong Kong Capitalists: 1937-1997* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 42-43; and Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong*, 315-316.

³¹⁷ Chu, *Chinese Communists and Hong Kong Capitalists*, 43-46; Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 183; John P. Burns, "The Structure of Communist Party Control in Hong Kong," *Asian Survey* 30, no.8 (1990): 749-750; and Jin, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mǐwén shìlù*, 2-3.

Beijing believed mass media to be instrumental in forming a “patriotic united front” within Hong Kong and winning the “hearts and minds” of the people. By June 1949, the CCP owned eight NCNA-supervised Hong Kong printers and publishers in Hong Kong, and at least seventeen bookshops responsible for wholesaling and retailing Maoist literature.³¹⁸ Beijing’s media influence was further extended indirectly through editors and journalists in Hong Kong who were communist or expressed support for the CCP.³¹⁹ The British colony was a useful Cold War tool for the PRC to disseminate Chinese-sponsored left-wing literature and propaganda overseas. This in turn demonstrates the top-down use Hong Kong had for the PRC’s Cold War policy. Following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the CCP recognized the value of using Hong Kong as a Cold War platform wherein the NCNA Hong Kong office would play a key role in coordinating the expansion of Maoist propaganda. CCP propaganda in the colony steadily increased. By the end of 1949, Leslie C. Smith noted that the strength of the CCP’s Hong Kong propaganda machine and its success in distributing Maoist material to other territories with significant ethnic Chinese communities.³²⁰ Historian Florence Mok details how NCNA literature printed and exported through Hong Kong promoted the PRC as the sole legitimate government by showcasing patriotism and Chinese culture. Printed literary works throughout the 1950s, such as *The Revolutionary History of Modern China* (*Zhōngguó xiàndài géming shǐ*, 中國現代革命史), *Mao Zedong’s Nineteen Poems* (*Máo Zédōng shīcí shíjiǔ shǒu*, 毛澤東詩詞十九首), and the magazine, *China Pictorial* (*rénmín huàbào*, 人民畫報), highlight the breadth of pro-

³¹⁸ TNA, FCO 141/4419, Grantham, ‘Report on Communist Activities in Hong Kong for the Six Months ending 31 December 1949,’ January 1950; and TNA, CO 537/4816, Hong Kong Police Special Branch, ‘Appendix II,’ 30 June 1949.

³¹⁹ Yan, “Limits to Propaganda,” 102-103.

³²⁰ TNA, CO 537/4816, Hong Kong Police Special Branch, ‘The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong,’ 30 June 1949; TNA, CO 537/4817, Smith to Heathcote-Smith, 1 October 1949; and TNA CO 1030/188, Martin to Grantham, 25 May 1956.

Communist publications produced in Hong Kong, and the NCNA's capacity to disseminate information on an array of matters that might resonant with an overseas audience.³²¹

The British government was aware of the influence of NCNA publications on Overseas Chinese communities. There were attempts to counter NCNA propaganda. The British Information Research Department (IRD) and the American United States Information System (USIS) cooperated on the ground through the Regional Information Office (RIO) in Singapore and its Hong Kong branch in planning and producing anti-Communist propaganda to be distributed in the form of newspapers, films, and pamphlets.³²²

In March 1967, Colin Wilson of the IRD sought information from the British embassies in Southeast Asia and from Leslie Smith, the representative of Hong Kong's RIO, on the impact the Cultural Revolution was having on Overseas Chinese communities. There were regional variations in the IRD's findings, most notably in Thailand, which had a strong anti-communist press and heavy American presence, and Cambodia, whose ethnic Chinese were divided between the propaganda efforts of the PRC and the KMT. Nonetheless, the IRC results showed the extent of the dissemination of Cultural Revolution propaganda across Southeast Asia. China Radio International, the *People's Daily*, and other NCNA news outlets explained the Cultural Revolution as a call to perpetuate class struggle. PRC international news outlets valorized Mao Zedong's as the indomitable and undisputed leader in the communist world. NCNA news downplayed political divisions within the PRC and trumpeted the idea of Mao's Cultural Revolution as a battle against revisionism and capitalism. Newspapers for Overseas Chinese communities frequently printed articles on Chinese history to show China's past and recent

³²¹ Florence Mok, "Disseminating and Containing Communist Propaganda to Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia through Hong Kong, the Cold War Pivot, 1949-1960," *The Historical Journal* (2021): 13-18.

³²² Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 202-203.

achievements as a means of fostering nationalist pride. The IRD survey also revealed that the Chinese diplomatic office and Chinese-owned news agencies played a top-down role in distributing Maoist propaganda material among Hong Kong Chinese.³²³ However, Smith did not provide any new information from Hong Kong's RIO, as his effort to collect the relevant information was put on hold following the outbreak of the 1967 Leftist Riots.³²⁴

Ten NCNA left-wing newspapers offered a communist spin to the events and coverage of the 1967 Leftist Riots. These media outlets encouraged the Hong Kong Leftists to continue their mobilization against the British authorities, and exaggerated reports of local support in materials republished in the PRC. They also helped to supply loudspeakers, posters, and propaganda material, including Mao Zedong's *Little Red Book* to the protesters. The colonial government was wary of censoring pro-Communist materials as Britain did not wish to antagonize the PRC and jeopardize Hong Kong colonial rule. The Emergency Regulations Ordinance of 1949 and the Control Publication and Consolidation Ordinance of 1951 required mandatory registration, submission and inspection of all newsprints and films by the Hong Kong Registrar. Violators of the ordinance laws could be fined and imprisoned.³²⁵ Yet, as Ying Du and Jing Jing Chang demonstrated the censorship board did not restrict anti-colonial statements so as to reduce tension between the two Cold War camps.³²⁶ In practice, the colonial government was reluctant to enforce censorship laws until the summer of 1967. The Hong Kong government needed to be

³²³ TNA, FCO 95/40, Leslie to Foreign Office/Commonwealth Office, 15 March 1967; TNA, FCO 95/40, Wilson to Joy and Weiser, 14 April 1967; TNA, FCO 95/40, Office of the Political Advisor to the C-in-C Far East to Joy, 17 April 1967; TNA, FCO 95/40, Davidson to Wilson, 17 April 1967; and TNA, FCO 95/40, McCann to Wilson, 18 April 1967.

³²⁴ TNA, FCO 95/40, Wilson to Joy, Welser, and Tucker, 21 April 1967; and TNA, FCO 95/40, Smith to Wilson, 13 April 1967; TNA FCO 95/40, Wilson to Office of the Political Advisor to the C-in-C Far East; and Alexander Nicholas Shaw, "Propaganda Intelligence and Covert Action: The Regional Information Office and British Intelligence in South-East Asia, 1949-1961," *Journal of Intelligence History* 19, no. 1 (2020): 51-76.

³²⁵ Yan, "Hong Kong's Leftist Media in the Cold War and Beyond," 100-101.

³²⁶ Ying Du, "Censorship, Regulations, and the Cinematic Cold War in Hong Kong (1947-1971)," *China Review* 17, no. 1 (2017): 117-151; and Chang, *Screening Communities*, 23-45.

perceived as upholding the same principles of freedom, justice, and the rule of law as applied in Britain and would not outright prohibit the publication and dissemination of communist literature.³²⁷ Similarly, the British government was not inclined to crack down on the distribution of communist literature to ethnic Chinese migrants in Britain by the NCNA's London branch.

The NCNA's London branch was opened and staffed by Chinese journalists and Communist members who had lived and worked in Britain or in colonial Hong Kong. Jack Chen 陳依範, a painter and journalist for *Reynolds News* from 1946-1947, was born in Trinidad to a Chinese family. He was educated in Britain before moving back to China upon the establishment of the Chinese Republic. Chen's sympathy with the communist cause began with the fall of the Wuhan government in 1927. Chen raised support for China in Britain during World War Two as an official war correspondent. He was well connected to British left groups, including Friends of China, the Artists International Association, and the China Campaign Committee (CCC). When Chen flew to Yan'an in 1942 and met CCP leaders Mao Zedong, Zhu De, and Zhou Enlai, he became "convinced that Chiang's days were numbered" and he agreed to travel back to London to "make known the truth of the situation in China."³²⁸ In 1947, Chen was asked by the CCP to travel to Britain to establish an NCNA branch in London. The new branch would serve not only as a press office but also as *de facto* embassy of the PRC in Britain.³²⁹

Huang Zuomei 黃左梅 (known as Raymond Wong Chok-mui by friends) was also a key factor in the creation of the NCNA London branch. Born in Sheung Shui, New Territories in 1916, Wong first worked as a teacher and then a Hong Kong dockyard clerk. In the mid-1930s

³²⁷ TNA, CO 1030/188, Dalton to Hanley, 5 May 1954; TNA CO 1030/582 Dalton to Wallace, 5 February 1958; and TNA CO 1030/583, Dalton to de la Mare, 7 March 1958.

³²⁸ Chen, *Inside the Cultural Revolution*, 16-45; and Buchanan, *East Wind*, 78-79.

³²⁹ Li Gucheng 李谷城, "Xiānggǎng xīnhuáshè de gōngnéng yǔ juésè" 香港新華社的功能與角色 (The Function and Role of Hong Kong Xinhua News Agency), *Asian Studies*, 18 (1996): 20-27; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 267; Chen, *Inside the Cultural Revolution*, 44-48; and Buchanan, *East Wind*, 107.

he was active in the “progressive” youth movement and, in June 1941, he became a member of the CCP. With the fall of Hong Kong to Japanese forces, Wong joined the East River Column (*Dōng hé zòngduì*, 東和總隊) and the British Army Aid Group (BAAG) and worked as an intelligence officer and rescued Allied prisoners of war. Following the war, Wong worked as Head of Office for the NCNA branch in Hong Kong to conduct English-language propaganda. Wong received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1947 for his support of the British against the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. Wong returned to Hong Kong in 1949 to become director of NCNA Hong Kong and head of the Hong Kong and Macau Work Committee under the CCP until he died in 1955.³³⁰

The NCNA London branch was supervised by Chen Tiansheng 陳天聲, also known as Samuel Chinque 陳天聲 (Sam Chen). Sam Chen emigrated to Liverpool in 1929 to become a seafarer. Shortly after, Sam Chen joined the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and became a leader of the Liverpool Chinese Seamen’s Union. Chen left the CPGB in 1963 as a result of the schism between the Soviet Union and the PRC and joined the CCP. He supervised the NCNA London branch until his retirement in 1982.³³¹

It is important to note that Jack Chen, Raymond Wong, and Sam Chen had all demonstrated their support to the CCP during the war. In turn, they were asked to continue to support the CCP by facilitating PRC representation in Britain. The NCNA was the *de facto* PRC embassy until 1954 when a formal exchange of chargé d’affaires was instituted between Britain and the PRC.³³² In the intervening years, the NCNA played an initial role of fostering

³³⁰ Li, “The Function and Role of Hong Kong Xinhua News Agency,” 20-37

³³¹ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese of Britain, 1800-Present*, 267; Buchanan, *East Wind*, 107; and Wei Djao, *Being Chinese: Voices from the Diaspora* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2003), 57.

³³² Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*, 55.

transnational ties between the PRC and Britain's ethnic Chinese migrant communities. It also proved pivotal in the distribution of PRC newspapers and propaganda during the Cultural Revolution.

As Lai's survey revealed, propaganda distributed among Britain's ethnic Chinese population by the London NCNA office, by providing glowing reports of the supposed economic and political success of Mao's PRC, had the desired effect of increasing patriotic sentiment. The NCNA's efforts also left a favourable impression of Mao's China on fringe elements within the British Left.³³³ While many of the NCNA's functions were overshadowed by the 1954 establishment of the Chinese Mission in London, the NCNA nonetheless played an important role in creating a positive image of the Cultural Revolution and the achievements of the PRC.

Tom Buchanan has described the period from 1954-1964 as the "Golden Years" for the British Left's relationship with the "new China." The British-China Friendship Association (BCFA), a successor to CCC and predecessor to the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU), greeted the arrival of Huan Xiang in 1954 with flowers. The CPGB and leading left-wing British newspapers published admiring articles of the PRC's rapid internal social reforms and massive infrastructure projects. They also wrote enthusiastically of the PRC's increasing international stature. For instance, they widely heralded Zhou Enlai's diplomatic role in the 1954 Geneva Conference and the 1955 Bandung Conference.³³⁴ The scholarship on the British Left's love affair with the PRC has often ignored the role of the NCNA in informing the British Left on Mao's transformation of China. In particular, the role of Sam Chen, as an emissary for the CCP to the British Left and as the principal contact between the CPGB and the Chinese Mission,

³³³ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 19-20; LMA, 4520/03/01/018; and Buchanan, *East Wind*, 142-147.

³³⁴ Buchanan, *East Wind*, 142-146.

should not be overlooked.³³⁵ With access to both the Chinese Mission and the NCNA in London, Chen distributed newspapers and journals, including the *People's Daily* (*Rénmín rìbào*, 人民日报), the official organ of the CCP, to the CPBG. Until the Sino-Soviet split in 1963, the Chinese Mission and NCNA were primarily focused on encouraging British Labour governments to re-establish trade between the two countries. Sam Chen and Raymond Wong both had close links to Wilfred Vernon, the left-wing Labour Minister of Parliament, who advocated for Britain to adopt a policy of friendship and trade with the Communist regime.³³⁶

The Chinese Mission and the NCNA London office of London supported left-leaning British PRC friendship organizations years before the launch of the Cultural Revolution. SACU was founded in 1965 by members of the British left who were dissatisfied with the BCFA for not positively presenting the Chinese perspective during the Sino-Soviet dispute. Leading figures of SACU included the academics Joseph Needham and Joan Robinson. Both Needham and Robinson praised the Chinese revolutionary cause. They declared that the main objectives of SACU would be to cultivate British interest in China and promote trade between Britain and the PRC.³³⁷ Yet, by 1967, with the escalation of the Vietnam War and the launch of the Cultural Revolution, SACU became more forthright in its defence of Chinese interests. SACU promoted PRC propaganda and was hostile of any negative media portrayals of the PRC or the Cultural Revolution. SACU's increased radicalism meant it lost some prominent sponsors, but its membership also grew with an influx of youth who were opposed to the Vietnam War and interested in Maoism.³³⁸ The London NCNA office and the Chinese Mission played an important role in radicalizing SACU. As historian Buchanan has revealed, Needham was already well

³³⁵ LMA, 4520/03/01/018; and TNA KV2/1607.

³³⁶ TNA, KV 2/2046, 19 March 1955; and Mark, *The Everyday Cold War*, 76-77; and TNA, KV 2/996.

³³⁷ SACU News, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1965.

³³⁸ Buchanan, *East Wind*, 195-199.

known by Chinese nationals after he published a defence of China's position on nuclear war in 1963, based on arguments circulated by the NCNA. Needham received a letter of thanks from the Chinese Mission for his efforts.³³⁹ The British NCNA branch and the Chinese Mission were crucial players in disseminating China's views during the Sino-Soviet split.³⁴⁰ It was important for both bodies to establish contacts with the British Left to win over foreign communists to the Chinese side of the Sino-Soviet split. These contacts also helped them gain propaganda support against the American war in Vietnam. Fostering ties with the British left was so important that Xiong Xianghui, the Chinese chargé, provided an official welcoming address on the launch of SACU on 15 May 1965 at Church House, Westminster.³⁴¹ The PRC exerted influence on the British Left to win support for the Chinese Mission, and PRC international policy, and to score a propaganda victory against the United States and the Soviet Union.³⁴² However, SACU's standing with the Chinese authorities diminished with the onset of the Cultural Revolution. Three members of the Chinese Mission did attend the second annual meeting of SACU in May 1967 and were met with applause, chants and the waving of the Little Red Book, but a relationship with SACU was no longer a top priority for Chinese authorities. Overly eager to please the Chinese, SACU's leaders pushed the organization into increasingly pro-PRC positions, leading to the organization's eventual decline.³⁴³

³³⁹ Ibid., 176.

³⁴⁰ Liu, "The Historicity of China's Soft Power: The PRC and the Cultural Politics of Indonesia, 1945-1965," 147-149; Ronald C. Keith, *The Diplomacy of Zhou Enlai* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 150-151; and Lorenz M. Lüthi, "The Origins of Proletarian Diplomacy: The Chinese Attack on the American Embassy in the Soviet Union, 4 March 1965," *Cold War History* 9, no. 3 (2009).

³⁴¹ James Feron, "Ties with Peking sought in Britain; Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding Formed," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), May 16, 1965.

³⁴² Perry Johansson, "China, Vietnam, and the European 1968: A Note on Chronology and World Revolution," *Monde(s) (Paris 2012)* 11, no. 1 (2017): 79-94.

³⁴³ Buchanan, *East Wind*, 195-197.

Instead of cultivating SACU's support, the Chinese Mission became more interested in exploring relationships with the variety of British-based Maoist organizations that emerged following outbreak of the Cultural Revolution and who vied for the honour of "recognition" from Chinese nationals. The Chinese Mission's staff assessed the likeliest "winners" of these splinter groups and who among them would emerge as an official new Maoist Communist party in Britain. Likewise, the staff members of the NCNA reported on the British Left's flirtations with Maoism as a victory in the Chinese press. However, the NCNA's efforts resulted in a farce attempt to portray themselves as victims of British atrocities, such as the refusal to rise at a court trial of British Leftists and for creating violent incidents with the London Police. However, the NCNA's effort to win mass support for the PRC did not materialize and was openly mocked by the British press.³⁴⁴

The extent of the influence of NCNA news media on Britain's ethnic Chinese community or among the British Left is unknown. However, the NCNA proved to be an important vessel in transmitting the PRC's domestic and foreign policies to a wide-ranging audience. In Britain, NCNA publications and editorials were well-read by British-Chinese migrants, especially those who belonged to pro-Beijing Chinese associations following 1949. For the PRC, the goal of NCNA-disseminated propaganda was less about winning new adherents to Maoism than to foster opposition to Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT and to legitimate the CCP as the true Chinese

³⁴⁴ TNA, FCO 21/87, McBrien to Chief Superintendent, 20 September 1967; TNA, FCO 21/87, Statement of Derek Ivor Roberts, 20 September 1967; TNA, FCO 21/87, Statement of Stuart Copas, 20 September 1967; TNA, FCO 21/87, McBrien to Chief Superintendent, 20 September 1967; TNA, FCO 21/80, Denson to de la Mare, 24 August 1967; TNA, FCO 21/80, Bolland to Foreign Office, 20 September 1967; TNA, FCO 21/87, McBrien to Payne, 21 September 1967; TNA, FCO 21/87, Home Office to Peking, 20 September 1967; and "NCNA Staff, UK Police Clash in London Court," *Peking NCNA International Service in English*, 23 September 1967.

authority and ensure that ethnic Chinese migrants continued to send remittances home that could be taxed to fund state projects.³⁴⁵

The Hong Kong Leftist Press

Lai's survey noted the importance of the Hong Kong Leftist press for the Chinese communities of Britain and Hong Kong. The circulation and sale of Hong Kong-based newspapers in Britain grew in the 1950s and into the 1960s. Before 1968, the five leading Hong Kong Chinese language daily newspapers were the *Wah Kiu Yat Po* 華僑日報 (*Overseas Chinese*), *Sing Tao Jih Pao* 星島日報 (*Sing Tao Daily*), *Wen Wei Po* 文匯報, *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, and the *New Evening Post* 新晚報. All five newspapers devoted a page to news to the New Territories and to matters pertaining to ethnic Chinese migrants in Britain. As Kwee Choo Ng reveals, the prominence of these papers' coverage of migrants and relatives in Britain indicates the interest and concern among readers for this information. *Wah Kiu Yat Po*'s also published workers' letters to their families back home.³⁴⁶ All five papers had political leanings and detailed the news of Hong Kong through an ideological lens. The *Wah Kiu Yat Po* was the sole right-wing newspaper. Conversely, the *Wen Wei Po*, *Ta Kung Pao*, and the *New Evening Post* were left-leaning newspapers.

The *Wen Wei Po* was founded in 1938 in Shanghai. The paper maintained a pro-communist position during the early years of the war under editor-in-chief Xu Zhucheng 徐鑄成. Shut down in 1947 by the KMT, the *Wen Wei Po* moved its operations to Hong Kong, and its

³⁴⁵ Oyen, "Communism, Containment, and the Chinese Overseas," 69-70; Liu, *Chinese Ambassadors*, 98-99; and HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 20; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 243-246; and Wu, *Dollars, Dependents, and Dogma*, 128-142

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 194-195; Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 81-83; Shang, *The Chinese in Britain*, 53; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 5.

five-member trustee board took an even stronger pro-communist position.³⁴⁷ The *Ta Kung Pao* was founded in Tianjin in 1902 but eventually settled in Hong Kong with the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. While the *Ta Kung Pao* supported the KMT at the beginning of the second phase of the Chinese Civil War, it switched its sympathies to the CCP after the KMT began to repress intellectuals, violently purge its opponents, and proved unable to deal with soaring inflation.³⁴⁸ The *Ta Kung Pao*'s Hong Kong branch added a distinctive "red" ideology to the once-neutral newspaper.³⁴⁹ Finally, the *New Evening Post*, launched in 1950 as an evening edition of *Ta Kung Pao*, was openly pro-communist and supportive of the PRC.³⁵⁰ The NCNA's Hong Kong branch distributed not only the CCP's official news and policies but also Hong Kong's leftist newspapers, which likewise disseminated views from the mainland to local Hong Kong and overseas readers.³⁵¹ All of this print media was distributed in Britain through the NCNA's London branch. Raymond Wong and Sam Chen also produced and published pro-PRC directly to the broader British public, which highlighted the achievements and development of China under the CCP and that exposed the contradictions between Britain and the United States East Asian Cold War policy. Throughout the 1950s to 1963, pro-communist newspapers were principally focused on portraying the PRC positively and critiquing Britain's support of the United States' "two China's policy."³⁵²

³⁴⁷ Xu Zhucheng 徐鑄成 "Xiānggǎng wénhuìbào chuàngkān qiánhòu 香港文彙報創刊前後 (Events around the Publication of the Hong Kong Edition of Wen Hui Po)," in *Xiānggǎng bàoyè chūnqiū* 香港報業春秋 (Chronicles of Hong Kong Newspapers), ed. Zhong Zi 鍾紫 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1991), 268-274.

³⁴⁸ Yan, "Limits to Propaganda," 103 and 108-111.

³⁴⁹ Li Gucheng 李谷城 *Xiānggǎng zhōngwén bàoyè fāzhāngshī* 香港中文報業發張師 (A History of Chinese Newspapers in Hong Kong) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), 327-332.

³⁵⁰ Carol P. Lai, *Media in Hong Kong: Press Freedom and Political Change, 1967-2005* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 117-145.

³⁵¹ Qiao Songdu 喬松都, *Qiáoguānhuá yǔ gōng pēng: Wǒ de fùqīn mǔqīn* 喬冠華與龔澎：我的父親母親 (Qiao Guanhua and Gong Peng: Both my Father and Mother) (Beijing Shi: Zhonghua shu ju, 2008), 93.

³⁵² Li Gucheng "Xiānggǎng xīnhuáshè de gōngnéng yǔ juésè," 20-27; and Charles Shaar Murray, "Samuel Chinque," *The Guardian* (London: United Kingdom), December 17, 2004; Buchanan, *East Wind*, 142-145; and Mark, *Hong Kong and the Cold War*, 28-29.

The *Ta Kung Pao* and the *Wen Wei Po* also reported on social discontent in British Hong Kong. In the wake of the 21 November 1951 Tung Tau Village fire, both newspapers accused the Hong Kong government of neglecting the poor.³⁵³ The following March, when the government barred Chinese relief from entering the colony in what has come to be known as the “March First Incident”, the *Ta Kung Pao*, the *Wen Wei Po*, and the *New Evening Press* reprinted a *People’s Daily* editorial stating that the Hong Kong government policies amounted to nothing less than a massacre of the Chinese populace. The Hong Kong government retaliated by issuing a court-ordered suspension of the publication of the *Ta Kung Pao* for six months. However, London and Beijing diplomacy led to a rescinding of the suspension.³⁵⁴ The Hong Kong Leftist press typically echoed propaganda from the PRC press, but they also, in their reports on local Hong Kong conditions, exposed real grievances widely shared by the Hong Kong Chinese.

Scholar Lu Yan details that the March First Incident and the 12-day suspension of the *Ta Kung Pao* did force Hong Kong’s Leftist media to soften their ideological belligerence and increase their local reporting. These changes spurred an increase in readership; by the mid-1960s Hong Kong’s Leftist newspapers had a circulation of 400,000 to 450,000. These papers reported on mainland news, local news, and local entertainment such as sports, dog racing, and horseracing.³⁵⁵ The leading six Leftist papers held a fifty percent share of Hong Kong’s Chinese newspaper market with a sizeable market share in Britain’s ethnic Chinese community.³⁵⁶ By broadening their content, the Leftist press was able to take particular Hong Kong problems, like the housing crisis and plight of squatters, and tie them to socialist values. Offering a critical voice on Hong Kong events, the Leftist media’s support grew, especially after the government

³⁵³ Zhou, *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ*, 83-84; Jin, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mǐwén shílù*, 25-26.

³⁵⁴ Yan, “Limits of Propaganda,” 108-109.

³⁵⁵ Yan, “Hong Kong’s Leftist Media in the Cold War and Beyond,” 112.

³⁵⁶ Jin, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mǐwén shílù* 33.

tried to crack down on their circulation. Thus, although the *Ta Kung Pao*, the *Wen Wei Po*, and the *Evening Press* published controversial editorials, the information they provided on local Hong Kong news was successfully combined with PCR nationalist values. The combination proved attractive not just to Hong Kong residents but also to Overseas Chinese communities, including those in Britain.³⁵⁷

The Hong Kong Leftist press quickly voiced their support for the 1967 Leftist demonstrators and in opposition to the British colonial government. For their part, the Hong Kong Leftist newspapers adopted the “language of the Cultural Revolution.” The *Ta Kung Pao* and the *Wen Wei Po* devoted their front pages to the *People’s Daily* editorials and coverage from the NCNA while deemphasizing local non-political news.³⁵⁸ PCR-friendly editorials contained considerable anti-colonial rhetoric: “British imperialism is the extremely vicious colonial ruler of Hong Kong, and the enemy of the 4 million Chinese compatriots there and the enemy of the 700 million Chinese people,” opined one editorial piece. Another argued that “British imperialism has done so much evil, incurred so many blood debts and committed such towering crimes; these accounts must be settled!”³⁵⁹ The Leftist papers proved adept at promoting Maoist propaganda during the 1967 Leftist Riots and helped to politicize the events, mobilize the masses, and raise morale.³⁶⁰ Hong Kong’s Special Branch estimated that the leading left-wing newspapers, including the *Wen Wei Po*, the *Ta Kung Pao*, and the *New Evening Press*, had a daily circulation of 352,000 in July 1967. This number was only about twenty-five percent of Hong Kong Chinese

³⁵⁷ Meredith Oyen, “Communism, Containment, and the Chinese Overseas,” in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, eds., Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 69-70

³⁵⁸ Jin, *Zhōnggòng Xiānggǎng zhèngcè mǐwén shǐlù*, 33; and Fan Hanqi 方漢奇, *Dàgōngbào bǎinián shǐ* 大公報百年史 (A Centennial History of Dagong Bao), (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe, 2004), 421.

³⁵⁹ “Resolutely Repel British Imperialist Provocations,” *Peking Review*, Vol. 10, no. 24, June 9, 1967, 11-12.

³⁶⁰ Alice Y.L. Lee, “The Role of Newspapers in the 1967 Riot: A Case Study of the Partisanship of the Hong Kong Press,” in *Press and Politics in Hong Kong: Case Studies from 1967 to 1997*, eds., Clement Y.K. So and Joseph Man Chan (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asian-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999), 38-39, 44-55.

population but constituted a nearly fifty percent share of Hong Kong's Chinese newspaper market.³⁶¹ These figures are a testament to the strength of the Leftist press prior to and during the 1967 Leftist Riots.

The British and Hong Kong Government's Information War

A war of propaganda was waged between the Leftists and the Hong Kong government over the course of the 1967 Leftist Riots. Governor Trench determined as early as May 1967 that a policy of firm action was needed against the communist press if Hong Kong was to remain in British hands.³⁶² Initially, London called for restraint for fear of agitating the PRC and to avoid adding fodder to Leftists that might earn them greater support. But, by late July 1967, the British authorities believed the time was right to strike against the local Leftist newspapers. The police raided the left-wing press and pro-Beijing unions to confiscate weapons and inflammatory materials.³⁶³ Further raids in response to the Leftist's terror bombing campaign led to a significant reduction in the circulation of left-wing newspapers. Circulation had dropped to 240,500 by November.³⁶⁴

On 24 August, as the riots raged on, K.Y. Yeung, the District Commissioner of the New Territories, met with Colonial Secretary Michael Gass to discuss concerns over the possibility of the unrest spreading into Britain's Chinatowns. While no doubt concerned over how this might affect remittances sent back to the New Territories, Yeung acknowledged that Hong Kong left-

³⁶¹ TNA: PRO, FCO 40/114, Special Branch, Daily Comparative Circulation Figures of Left-wing Newspapers-1967, 26 October 1967; Yan, "Hong Kong's Leftist Media in the Cold War and Beyond," 110-111; and John Carroll, "A Historical Perspective," 72.

³⁶² TNA FCO 21/191, Hong Kong to Commonwealth Office, Telegram No. 607, 15 May 1967.

³⁶³ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 176; TNA, FCO 21/202, Washington to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 1992, 10 June 1967; and Yep, "The 1967 Riots in Hong Kong," 133.

³⁶⁴ TNA, FCO 40/114, Special Branch, Daily Comparative Circulation Figures of Left-Wing Newspapers: 1967, 26 October 1967; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 3-4.

wing newspapers enjoyed a much larger circulation in Britain's Chinatowns than the right-wing newspaper, *Wah Kiu Yat Po* and possibly create a crisis of legitimacy for British authorities.³⁶⁵

In David Lai's discussion with Ho Chuen-yiu, former chairman of the Heung Yee Kuk, Chuen-yiu shared that during his five months stay in Britain in 1967 he observed that current copies of the *Ta Kung Pao* were readily available for purchase in London. In comparison, right-wing papers such as the *Hong Kong Times Daily* were out-of-date and hard to find. If you wanted current news of Hong Kong, shared Chuen-Yiu, it meant reading left-leaning papers. Lai shared that the Hong Kong government was aware of the situation and had just produced a *News Digest* for overseas readers. Mr. Wong Yeun-cheung, Chairman of the Tai Po Rural Committee, believed readers would question the government bias of the *News Digest*. Mr. Pang Fu-wah, the Chairman of the Kuk, suggested that the Kuk publish the *News Digest* themselves to provide an air of impartiality. While Wong and Pang hoped to make the *News Digest* a vehicle to advance Kuk interests, Lai and Yeung countered that the government had an obligation to provide undistorted, government news to the Hong Kong Chinese population at home and abroad.

Lai also shared with the Kuk, that the Hong Kong government had been keeping tabs on the NCNA's distribution of PRC news materials. It was partly out of concern over the NCNA's effectiveness that the HKGO's Information Section was instructed during the peak of the 1967 Leftist Riots to create and distribute the *News Digest* to Britain's ethnic Chinese community. The *News Digest* was a collection of reprints from Hong Kong's non-leftist newspapers.³⁶⁶ However, Lai soon discovered that the *News Digest* did not reduce interest in Hong Kong Leftist

³⁶⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, 24 August 1967, 1-3; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 9.

³⁶⁶ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 41-44; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Minutes of a Meeting, 27 November 1967: 1-3.

newspapers. A large part of Lai's survey and British visit was to assess the influence Hong Kong's Leftist press was having within Britain's ethnic Chinese communities.

Given the popularity of Chinese news propaganda overseas, both among the ethnic Chinese migrants and within the British Left, it is no surprise that Lai concluded that British and Hong Kong governments needed to step up their counterpropaganda campaign. Lai reported that the Hong Kong left-wing newspapers, the *Ta Kung Pao*, the *Wen Wei Po*, and the *Evening News* had a circulation of 4,500 daily across Britain's major cities. This amounted to nearly three times the daily circulation of government-friendly newspapers airlifted from Hong Kong, including the *Wah Kiu Yat Po* and the *News Digest*. Hong Kong left-wing newspapers had a jumpstart in reporting the events of the 1967 Leftist riots; it was not until August of 1967 that the British and Hong Kong government made any efforts to provide their perspective on the unrest to Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Although the left-wing reports of the 1967 Leftist riots confirmed many ethnic Chinese perceptions about colonial mismanagement, Lai was repeatedly told during his tour that most of the ethnic Chinese migrants in Britain were not dogmatic supporters of Maoism. They read the left press because it was written in Chinese and was cheap, timely, and available. By April 1968, the Information Services Department's *News Digest* had been distributed to some 10,000 addresses, but because it was only produced in English, many in Britain were unable to read it.³⁶⁷

Lai discovered that the Kung Ho Association, a pro-Beijing Chinese association, served as the leading distributor of left-wing newspapers to subscribers, many of whom listed their address as a Chinese restaurant. In London, particularly in the West End, an agent hawked the newspapers for 1/-d. Unsold papers were returned to the agent without loss to the retail

³⁶⁷ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 22-23, 28, and 79; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 11.

distributor. Agent distribution was supplemented by information bulletins published and released for free by the Chinese Mission in London. These bulletins compiled radio announcements and Beijing newspapers articles; they also contained reprints of Hong Kong left-wing news.³⁶⁸ The Chinese Mission and/or Hong Kong Leftists must have provided some level of financial support to enable this level of circulation and distribution.

Given the transnational influence by Chinese propaganda and the Hong Kong Leftists media, it was clear the British and Hong Kong governments needed a counterresponse. Colony-friendly news needed to be shared with the ethnic Chinese migrants, to improve the perception of colonial initiatives and to ensure the steady flow of remittance from Chinatown to the New Territories. As such, Lai recommended an expansion of the HKGO's Information Section and the re-organization of the Liaison Office. Lai shared that the way in which the Information Section publicized the Heung Yee Kuk Delegation goodwill tour of Britain was an example of what the Information Section could achieve. However, the HKGO would need to be strengthened to do more to counter the efforts of the NCNA and the Hong Kong Leftist newspapers.

To understand what was needed Lai made a thorough survey of the Information Section's assets and deficits. The Section operated as part of the HKGO's Commerce and Industry Department. There were three distinct objectives in its original mandate. First, the HKGO informed the British public of Hong Kong government's work and the colony's development. Second, it assisted the Trade Development Council to promote Hong Kong/British trade. Its third objective was to inform the Hong Kong government on events occurring in Britain, especially as pertained to the colony's interest. To carry out these functions, the Section monitored reports

³⁶⁸ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 19-23; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary 24 August 1967; Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 56; Byron Rogers, "The Strange Community of Gerrard Street," *Telegraph Magazine* (London: United Kingdom), 1970; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 9.

from Hong Kong's Information Services Department and distributed information about Hong Kong to British specialist trade papers.

The Information Section knew of the poor circulation of Chinese-language, colony-friendly newspapers within Britain's ethnic Chinese communities. The absence, and the problem it posed, became abundantly clear during the 1967 Leftist riots. The Information Section collected data to suggest that it had been difficult for commercially-dependent colony-friendly newspapers to compete with PRC-subsidized left-wing newspapers. Left-wing newspapers were sold on commission while Hong Kong-friendly ones required payment in advance. Lai held several informal meetings with the proprietor of Tung Po Overseas Ltd., the sole agent of the *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, to explore means to increase its circulation, and other right-wing Chinese newspapers, in Britain. Tung Po Overseas Ltd. sold an average of 1,500 copies of newspapers daily, of which approximately 1,000 were *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, with the remaining 500 published by eight non-communist newspapers and one left-inclined newspaper. Its proprietor was not inclined to bring more newspaper in unless he was paid in advance. A copy of *Wah Kiu Yat Po* was produced and delivered for HK\$0.37 per copy and sold in Britain for HK\$0.73 each. The total number of unsold copies was between forty and fifty per day. The Tung Po proprietor bore the loss.³⁶⁹

Lai's solution was the creation of a free "New Digest." Patrons would pay the postage and receive an acknowledgment in each issue. He also proposed that the government subsidize Tung Po Ltd.'s losses as the company was a reliable British distributor. Conversely, Lai offered the option to approach the owners of *Wah Kiu Yat Po* and ask them to appoint sub-agents in Britain's main cities to sell their papers to the ethnic Chinese community. In return, the

³⁶⁹ Ibid.: 44-46.

government would agree to subsidize HK\$0.10 for each unsold copy. Lai noted to his superiors that he had not proposed either of these options to the appropriate parties; if both declined government subsidy offers, an alternative to distributing pro-Hong Kong periodicals would be needed.³⁷⁰

During their tour, the Kuk offered their own solution to the lack of anti-Communist Hong Kong news in Britain. In mid-January, during the period when the Kuk were frustrated by the lacklustre reception from British dignitaries, Lai discovered that the delegation was actively soliciting funds from the ethnic Chinese migrants to start up a non-government subscription newspaper. They promised this paper would be the “voice” of the people of the New Territories. Lai responded that tersely that without sanction from the Hong Kong government the Kuk’s plan would backfire and only increase the strength of the Communists.³⁷¹ Lai was likely overstating the case. He disliked any idea that would increase the Kuk’s influence upon Britain’s ethnic Chinese community. On 3 February, Governor Trench tacitly agreed with Lai and indicated that any discussion on a Kuk-distributed Chinese journal in Britain could wait until the Kuk delegation’s return to Hong Kong.³⁷²

The Kuk were not quick to give up their dream of distributing their own newspaper to Britain’s Chinese community. On 15 July 1968, Chan Yat-sen, the Kuk’s new Chairman, sent a message to K.S. Kinghorn, the New Territories’ District Commissioner, on the importance of producing and distributing a Chinese-language pro-colony paper in Britain. Yat-sen let the commissioner know that, provided the Kuk was adequately compensated by the government, they would be happy to produce a monthly journal reporting on the government’s rulings,

³⁷⁰ Ibid.: 60-62; and Rawcliffe, “Turning a New Leaf,” 11.

³⁷¹ TNA, FCO 30/131, Commonwealth Office to Hong Kong, 2 February 1968.

³⁷² TNA, FCO 30/131, Hong Kong to Commonwealth Office, 3 February 1968.

welfare reform, construction and development, and colourful village happenings for ethnic Chinese audiences in Britain.³⁷³ It appears Kinghorn briefly entertained the idea, perhaps because the Kuk were in Governor Trench good favour after he credited their previous goodwill tour with the warm reception he received during his own May 1968 tour of Britain's Chinatown. Kinghorn asked the Kuk to provide a cost estimate and more details on the journal's proposed contents.³⁷⁴ In September the Kuk provided a financial breakdown of HK\$9,000 a month (HK\$1,440 to print, HK\$500 to bind, HK\$2,350 to post, HK\$2,800 to staff, HK\$200 to cover travel, and HK\$1,000 for miscellaneous expenses).³⁷⁵ It appears this was too steep because, by October, the District Commissioner informed Kuk Representatives that official Hong Kong government news would be published in the *News Digest*. The *New Digest* would be the Hong Kong government's organ, a 4-page newspaper with a page devoted to news on the New Territories, mailed free of charge to ethnic Chinese across Britain.³⁷⁶ If there was going to be a news outlet to counter Chinese Communist propaganda, the Hong Kong government, not the Kuk, was going to be in charge of it.

During the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots, the Hong Kong government banned all communist films from being screened, suspended three pro-Beijing newspapers, arrested several Leftist journalists for alleged violation of the Emergency Regulations, and severely limited the printing capabilities of the leftist press.³⁷⁷ Historian Gregor Benton has shown how Communists

³⁷³ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Liaison with Hong Kong Chinese People Living in Britain: By Mr. Chan Yat-sen, 15 July 1968: 1-2.

³⁷⁴ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Minutes between District Commissioner, N.T. and the Heung Yee Kuk, 25 July 1968: 1-7.

³⁷⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Director of Information Services, 9 September 1968: 1-2.

³⁷⁶ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Director of Information Services, 28 October 1968; and Author, (Title omitted for blind review) (2021), 11.

³⁷⁷ Ray Yep and Robert Bickers, "Studying the 1967 Riots: An Overdue Project," in *May Days in Hong Kong: Riot and Emergency in 1967*, eds., Ray Yep and Robert Bickers (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 9; Ray Yep, "Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong: Emergency Powers, Administration of Justice and the Turbulent

did their best to block Hong-Kong friendly media from circulating in Britain.³⁷⁸ The Hong Kong government did not have authorization to impose a total ban on all Maoist propaganda on British soil, nor did the British government consider the possession, sale or distribution of Mao Zedong or Cultural Revolution memorabilia or newspapers a criminal offence.³⁷⁹ Likewise, the British and Hong Kong governments wished not to offend the Chinese Mission and potentially spark a reaction that could further deteriorate Anglo-Chinese relations, especially on matters pertaining to the Hong Kong colony.

Hong Kong government officials supported Lai's recommendation by hiring two additional Hong Kong Chinese information officers, fluent in both English and Chinese (Cantonese). With additional staff came increased pro-colony news distribution. By early 1968, the government-vetted news compendium, the *News Digest*, was freighted in by air from Hong Kong and distributed free to 19,000 British-based subscribers. The British Information network aided in its dissemination. Several hundred copies of the *News Digest* were also distributed to the ethnic Chinese migrants in mainland Europe, notably the Netherlands, which had a large ethnic Chinese diaspora, and among Chinese seafarers to challenge their sympathy with the aims of the Cultural Revolution.³⁸⁰ The British and Hong Kong governments also agreed to subsidized non-communist Chinese newspapers in Britain, including the *Wah Kiu Yap Po*, via lowered freight charges and a direct HK\$0.10 subsidy per copy.³⁸¹ The British government appointed sub-agents in all major British city centres to promote the sale of the *Wah Kiu Yap Po*.

Year of 1967," *Modern Asian Studies* 46, no. 4 (2012): 1010-1016; Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97*, 148-149; and Zhou, *Xiānggǎng zuópài dòuzhēng shǐ*, 185-188.

³⁷⁸ Benton, "Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong," 345.

³⁷⁹ Barnes, *Museum Representations of Maoist China*, 66-70.

³⁸⁰ TNA, FCO 40/131, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs to Officer Administering the Government of Hong Kong, 28 March 1968; and Evans, *Mersey Mariners*, 263.

³⁸¹ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 59-62; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 11.

The British Information Research Department (IRD) also played a minor role in establishing a pro-colonial newspaper. The IRD was established in 1948 as an institute dedicated to rebutting Communist claims and subtly undermining those who made them.³⁸² Several historians have criticized the role of the IRD in spreading Cold War propaganda in the Middle East and Sub-Indian continent³⁸³ and for discrediting public figures at home in Britain, such as Joseph Needham, in ways reminiscent to McCarthy “red scare” tactics in the United States.³⁸⁴ The British IRD was also active undermining Mao’s influence in Southeast Asia and kept tabs on Maoist sentiment among the Chinese diaspora. In the wake of the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots and David Lai’s survey of Britain’s ethnic Chinese, A.C. Ashworth, the Regional Information Officer of the IRD’s RIO in Hong Kong, recommended to the FCO a new anti-communist, pro-colonial Chinese language publication to be based in Hong Kong and directed towards the Overseas Chinese community. Colin Wilson of the Far Eastern Department of the FCO, and a member of the IRD, warned Ashworth that due to a struggling British economy, the government might balk at the expense of such a venture. The IRD already sponsored, directly and indirectly, the production of three Chinese publications, including: the *China News Summary*, produced by the RIO Hong Kong; the *Chinese Monthly Newsletter*, produced by the Union Press for the Overseas Chinese in Sarawak, Malaysia; and *The News Analyst*, edited by George Wong for the Malaysian government. Should funds be granted Wilson suggested that RIO Hong Kong

³⁸² Tony Shaw, “The Information Research Department of the British Foreign Office and the Korean War, 1950-53,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 2 (1999): 263-281.

³⁸³ Spencer Mawby, “The British Brand of Anti-Imperialism: Information Policy and Propaganda in South Arabia at the End of Empire,” in *British Propaganda and Wars of Empire: Influencing Friend and Foe 1900-2010*, ed. Greg Kennedy and Christopher Tuck (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014) and Paul M. McGarr, “The Information Research Department, British Covert Propaganda, and the Sino-Indian War of 1962: Combating Communism and Courting Failure?,” *The International History Review* 41, no. 1 (2019): 130-156.

³⁸⁴ Buchanan, *East Wind*, 135.

consider a Chinese version of *The Star* with the intention that the primary audience be Overseas Chinese youth.³⁸⁵

The Star was Hong Kong's first tabloid newspaper, founded by Australian journalist Graeme Jenkins in 1965. Jenkins started working on national and Melbourne newspapers before he was conscripted in the Second World War, where he served as a war correspondent. Following the war, Jenkins reported on events unfolding in the 1945 Indonesian declaration of independence, the Malayan Emergency, the fall of Nanjing during the Chinese Civil War to the CCP forces, and the French-Indochina War. In 1955, he became Reuters manager for Southeast Asia, based in Singapore. After three years, Jenkins embarked on a new career in Hong Kong, first with Reuters, then with *The Standard*. In 1965 he founded *The Star*, which was considered brash and risqué for its tabloid formula of “maximum photo projection” and brief, snappy stories. Despite Jenkins's well-documented xenophobia and anger management issues, IRD and the Hong Kong government considered him a reliable anti-Communist ally.³⁸⁶ For these reasons, the IRD loaned Jenkins £12,000 through the International Forum in 1965 to help fund the first edition of *The Star*.³⁸⁷

An agreement was drawn up on 28 November 1968 by RIO's officer Ashworth to provide an interest-free loan of HK\$175,000 (£12,000) for Jenkins to acquire Chinese character typewriters and to secure an appropriate office. The governor of Hong Kong approved the agreement on 17 December. Over the next month, the Hong Kong government set up a Propaganda Working Group (PWG) to feed pro-colonial material to a Chinese-language version

³⁸⁵ TNA, FCO 168/3242, Wilson to Ashworth, 20 September 1968.

³⁸⁶ Peter Putnis, “Jenkins, Graham (1916-1997),” Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2022, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jenkins-graham-31629>; and Kevin Sinclair, *Tell Me a Story: Forty Years Newspapering in Hong Kong and China*, Hong Kong: SCMP Book Publishing Ltd., 2007), 21-29.

³⁸⁷ TNA FCO 168/3242, Stevenson to Simpson, 17 February 1970; and TNA FCO 168/3242, Stevenson to Simpson, 2 March 1970.

of *The Star*. The Chinese version of *The Star* was not meant to replace the English-language version; instead, it was aimed at monolingual Hong Kong Chinese youth with low literacy skills. From the get-go, the IRD was leery of Ashworth's leadership under this scheme. In particular, officials worried about the optics if it were exposed that the RIO and IRD, and by extension the British and the colonial government, had any involvement in funding an anti-communist Chinese-language tabloid.³⁸⁸ While trying to stay under the radar, the IRD operated as the Cold War propaganda unit of the British government and played a small but essential role in the creation of *The Star* as a vessel to disseminate a range of pro-colonial news to Chinese residing in Hong Kong, Britain, and Southeast Asia.³⁸⁹

The first Chinese edition of *The Star* was released on 1 December 1969 with an expected daily circulation of 20,000 copies. Actual sales far exceeded Jenkins' predictions, with a first-day circulation of 65,000 down slightly to 40,000 by 4 December. Britain's Special Branch completed a survey in July 1970 which determined, with satisfaction, that *The Star* maintained a daily circulation of 18,000 copies. In September, its circulation jumped to 50,000. The RIO continued to feed the paper with pro-colonial content. Tabloids for both the English and Chinese versions often emphasized the Hong Kong government's work in improving the colony's social welfare. Notably, in the wake of the Leftist Riots, *The Star* highlighted the government's efforts to strengthen the field of education stating that "no-cost spared-Gov. will spend millions on schools [audio-visual equipment for public schools]."³⁹⁰ Behind the scenes, the IRD was

³⁸⁸ TNA, FCO 168/3242, Ashworth to Wilson, 2 October 1968; TNA FCO 168/3242, Ashworth to Stevenson, 28 November 1968; TNA, FCO 168/3242, Ashworth to Stevenson, 18 December 1968; TNA, FCO 168/3242, Ashworth to Stevenson, 9 May 1969; TNA, FCO 168/3242, Crook to Ashworth.

³⁸⁹ James B. Smith, "The British Research Department and Cold War Propaganda Publishing," in *Pressing the Fight: Print Propaganda, and the Cold War*, eds., Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010), 112-116.

³⁹⁰ HKPRO, HKRS800-1-3, Newspaper Cuttings from "The Star," 2 and 17.

instrumental in funding a Chinese-language version of *The Star* and feeding it with pro-colonial government propaganda.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the Cold War information battle waged by pro-colonial government forces and their allies in the wake of the 1967 Hong Kong riots. As Lai's initial survey revealed, PRC left-wing propaganda out-distributed pro-colonial news within Britain's ethnic Chinese populace. Indeed, the British and Hong Kong governments had been slow to inform Britain's ethnic Chinese community of the unrest that shook Hong Kong throughout 1967. Instead, Britain's ethnic Chinese read about the 1967 Leftist Riots from a PRC-friendly, pro-Cultural Revolution perspective. British and Hong Kong officials agreed with Lai's assessment that they needed to step up their counterpropaganda campaign to win hearts and minds, create social stability, and ensure the steady flow of remittance back to the colony.

The Cold War information battle was a costly endeavour. For ten years, the NCNA and the Chinese Mission had financed the spread of PRC media. While some of the editorial content of this media spread outlandish claims, many of their anti-colonial arguments, especially those on the poverty and poor social conditions of Hong Kong Chinese, resonated with readers. Although these left-wing newspapers did not win many Maoist devotees, the transnational efforts to spread anti-colonial, pro-Left media proved effective in highlighting real grievances among Hong Kong Chinese and their British diaspora. To disrupt PRC-friendly media, the British and Hong Kong governments subsidized pre-existing pro-colonial newspapers such as the *New Digest* and the *Wah Kiu Yat Po* and quietly funded the Chinese-language *The Star*. These papers were distributed to ethnic Chinese communities in Britain and Hong Kong to counteract the

propaganda efforts of the left-wing press, boost confidence in both governments, and ensure a steady flow of remittance back to the New Territories.

Chapter Five- Socio-Economic Dissatisfaction with life in Hong Kong and Britain

David Lai's 1967 survey concluded that PRC propaganda and left-friendly media resonated among Britain's ethnic Chinese community because it was adept at stitching together real grievance and socio-economic dissatisfaction both in the colony and in the metropole. This chapter investigates Lai's contention by examining the particular social-economic issues faced by ethnic Chinese in Britain, especially those related to immigration, recreation, education, language supports, and the absence of a pro-colony Chinese leadership. Throughout his survey, Lai sought to assess the magnitude of these problems and suggest ways the British and Hong Kong governments might intervene. Lai discovered that many of these socio-economic grievances predated the 1967 Leftist Riots. Many of these issues could be traced back to the early colonial days of Hong Kong, in which Chinese trade unions left an impact on union and association-building efforts in Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

Lai found that socio-economic issues that the British authorities had ignored in Hong Kong resurfaced in Britain's Chinatowns cultivating a culture of resentment. Because of the lack of attention by British and Hong Kong officials on the social welfare of Britain's ethnic Chinese communities, many were drawn to the offerings of pro-Beijing associations and the Chinese Mission, which provided social community centres, films and recreational entertainment, and a sense of community, all wrapped up in a pro-Maoist package. Users were attracted to these PRC-backed services, not because they were ardent Maoists, but rather because the Chinese Mission met real community needs. Following Lai's recommendations, the British and Hong Kong governments realized that they needed to foster leadership in Britain's Chinatown friendly to the British Empire, improve government social services available to the ethnic Chinese migrants, and promote a Hong Kong identity distinct from the one fostered by the PRC.

The first section of this chapter will trace the beginning of a bottom-up transnational network established by ethnic Chinese migrants. Initial Chinese settlement in Britain was largely the result of the demand for Chinese sailors to replace Britons during periods of war. British Chinese migrants were frequently targets of discrimination. During and after the Great War many Chinese seafarers in London and Liverpool found solidarity and a means to counter their discrimination within left-wing organizations and trade unions. Although ethnic Chinese membership in trade unions declined after the Second World War because the majority of migrants were entering into the non-unionized catering industry, there remained radical union leaders who formed pro-Beijing associations.

Meanwhile, in British Hong Kong, the continued allegiance of many citizens with the CCP or KMT undermined political stability. By the 1950s, Maoism quickly became the fundamental political framework for many Hong Kong Leftists. These leftists portrayed themselves as victims of British colonial policy. Hong Kong Leftist values also found traction among some of Britain's Chinese migrants. The communist East River Column (*Dōng hé zòngduì*, 東江縱隊), which fought during the Second World War against the Japanese occupation (1941-1945), left a lasting legacy in Hong Kong. A number of East River Column veterans also settled in Britain.

The second section of this chapter examines the particular socio-economic grievances identified in Lai's survey of Britain's ethnic Chinese migrants. The British and Hong Kong governments were oblivious to the needs of the ethnic Chinese community. The Commonwealth Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1968 had a significant impact on the Chinese restaurant trade in Britain, which was dependent on a continuous flow of migration of Hong Kong Chinese to fill the labour demand. Lai learned that many Hong Kong Chinese resented the restrictions imposed

by the Acts, which they believed blocked their economic prosperity. A lack of pro-colonial leadership, noted Lai, had caused many to be drawn into the orbit of pro-Beijing associations. Similarly, pro-Beijing recreational and social offerings were often the only options available to Britain's ethnic Chinese community.

The final section of this chapter explores Lai's recommendations to the British and Hong Kong governments on how best to displace the influence of the PRC within British-Chinese communities and address socio-economic disparities. Lai called for the HKGO to finance measures to promote pro-colony leadership in Britain's Chinatowns, provide recreational and educational activities and spaces, and foster a unique, anti-Communist Hong Kong identity. The 1967 Leftist Riots forced the British and Hong Kong governments to invest in the welfare of Britain's ethnic Chinese community not only to combat pro-Maoist sentiments but also to help reinforce the transnational tie between the Chinese community in Britain and in Hong Kong. In other words, colonial officials needed to express a public commitment to care for the people's needs. The reforms the British and Hong Kong governments enacted following the 1967 Leftist Riots helped maintain transnational ties and foster a distinct Hong Kong identity.

Early Chinese Transnationalism

Britain's earliest Chinese communities were composed of sojourning seafarers who had no intention of staying in Britain. Nevertheless, those who did stay created British/Hong Kong networks to maintain contact, deliver remittance, and support further migration. Waves of Hong Kong Chinese migration were drawn from two sources. Britain's ethnic Chinese favoured the migration of family and/or village contacts who shared a similar dialect and cultural interest. The ties that bound the Cantonese to their sending places were perfected by practice over the nineteenth century due to the growth of the Chinese coolie trade to the British Empire, United

States, and Southeast Asia.³⁹¹ Conversely, to meet their labour demands, British shipping companies recruited Chinese workers via local labour agencies. For example, the Blue Funnel Line recruited Chinese seafarers from the adjacent regions of Shanghai and Hong Kong.³⁹² As a result, a specific Cantonese community formed within Britain with its own practices of emigration and remittance. Migrants maintained ties with family and friends via the transnational networks created by telegraphs, mail, railway, and shipping lines.³⁹³

Early trade union activity among Chinese seafarers played an important role in fostering leftist values among Britain's ethnic Chinese migrants. The early Chinese trade unions "played an important role in shaping the Chinese community, nurturing its political consciousness, and sharpening its focus on China, the diaspora, and Chinese migrant labour worldwide," write historians Gregor Benton and Edmond Terence Gomez.³⁹⁴ In November 1906, the *Liverpool Courier* reported that unionized Chinese seafarers supported Sun Yat-sen's call for a Revolutionary Alliance. Britain's ethnic Chinese seafarers raised funds to support the 1911 Chinese Revolution and shared news of the Revolution to the Chinese diaspora. The Chinese Seamen's Union, founded in Hong Kong in March 1921, came out in support of the Canton-Hong Kong workers' strike. The Chinese Seamen's Union was suppressed in 1927 during the Communist United Front period, only to be revived by local Hong Kong Communists in 1937.³⁹⁵

While trade unions offered class-based solidarity, British xenophobia and anti-immigrant attitudes also pushed ethnic Chinese to egalitarian leftist politics. Britain's post-World War One

³⁹¹ Elizabeth Sinn, ed., *The Last Half Century of Chinese Overseas* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998).

³⁹² Bob Evans, *Mersey Mariners* (Birkenhead: Countyvise Limited, 1997), 259-260.

³⁹³ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 206-207.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 263.

³⁹⁵ Gregor Benton, "The Comintern and Chinese Overseas," 135-138.

economic decline, and the appeal of eugenic and social-hygiene movements created strong anti-Asian animus in nations such as Britain Australia, Canada, and South Africa. In 1904, British labour expressed its displeasure with the importation of 20,000 Chinese to labour in South Africa's Transvaal gold mines.³⁹⁶ In fact, British labour frequently protested against the use of cheap Chinese labour at the expense of the British worker. In July 1911, anti-Chinese riots broke out during a transport worker's strike in Cardiff. British sailors destroyed thirty-three Chinese laundries in protest of Chinese seamen acting as strike-breakers. There was further violence in the summer of 1916 when the British Sailors' and Firemen's Union protested the increasing use of Chinese labour on British ships. In May-June 1919 race riots broke out in Britain's major ports as unemployed British seamen protested the large-scale use of Chinese seamen, whom they believed were undercutting their wages. The reality was that the 95,000-strong Chinese Labour Corps was needed to replace British workers who had fought and died in the First World War. Following the war, the decline of the shipping trade, the enactment of restrictive immigration legislation, economic depression, and xenophobic popular culture limited and isolated Britain's ethnic Chinese population.³⁹⁷

Racism within British trade unions hampered British/Chinese solidarity. Instead, the ethnic Chinese often organized their own unions to advocate their interests. Sam Chen was instrumental in establishing a British branch of the Chinese Seamen's Union in Liverpool in 1940. The Chinese Seamen's Union maintained transnational ties of solidarity between the ethnic Chinese community in Liverpool and Hong Kong until Japan's occupation in 1941.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ David Parker, "Chinese People in Britain: Histories, Futures, and Identities," in *The Chinese in Europe*, eds., Gregor Benton and Frank N. Pieke (London: Macmillan Ltd., 1998), 70-71; Lee *Chinas Unlimited*, 90; and Seed, "Limehouse Blues," 72-73.

³⁹⁷ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 295-298; Seed, "Limehouse Blues," 73-75; Shang, *The Chinese in Britain*, 10; and Parker, "Chinese People in Britain," 72-73.

³⁹⁸ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 267; and Charles Shaar Murray, "Samuel Chinque," *The Guardian* (London: United Kingdom), December 17, 2004.

They also campaigned for equal pay, treatment, and compensation. The Chinese Seamen's Union successfully negotiated an agreement with Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Limited on 1 January 1941, which ensured that Chinese seamen who worked on British ships would receive a war bonus of £5 per month, a special allowance of £3 per month for travel between Britain, Singapore, and Hong Kong, wrongful dismissal remittance, and survivor and injury compensation.³⁹⁹

Involvement in trade unions declined after the Second World War as most postwar Chinese migrants found employment in the non-unionized catering business. The remaining ethnic Chinese seafarers often refused to join trade unions due to the fear of being blacklisted by British shipping companies. Nonetheless, prewar labour activity set the groundwork for later alliances with postwar leftist organizations and the CCP. For instance, Sam Chen developed significant networks with the Save China campaign during the Japanese occupation, including a long-standing friendship with Jack Chena. Chena served as a mediator between the British Left and the communists and would, along with Sam Chen, serve as the head of the NCNA branch in London following the war. Chen also worked alongside Alan Clegg (1914-1994), the political activist and former member of the CPGB. Chen and Clegg played pivotal roles in the CCC, the principal organization supporting China against Japanese aggression.⁴⁰⁰

Important left-leaning Chinese civic leaders and associations also emerged from out of the Chinese Seamen's Union, including the Kung Ho Association 共和協會 and the Tai Ping Club 太平會. The Kung Ho Association was established by Sam Chen in 1947. It was located on Meard Street and maintained a membership between the 1950s to 1980s of roughly three

³⁹⁹ LMA, 4520/02/01/002.

⁴⁰⁰ LMA, 4520/02/02/005; LMA 4520/02/02/007; George Matthews, "Obituary: Arthur Clegg," *Independent* (London: United Kingdom), February 16, 1994; Cosima Bruno, "Writing in London: Home and Language in the Work of London Poets of Chinese Descent," *Life Writing* 14 (2017): 47; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 266-268; Jack Chen, *Inside the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), 44-48; Buchanan, *East Wind*, 13, 78-79, and 107; and Field Research conducted in March 2020.

hundred. Its original purpose was to unite overseas Chinese in Britain, improve their welfare, provide cultural activities, and mediate disputes on behalf of members. After 1949, the pro-Beijing association regularly showcased films released by the PRC. Today, the Kung Ho Association is apolitical and provides language instruction and recreational activities at its Peter Street and Kendrick Place locations. The now-defunct Tai Ping Club was formed in London in 1948. Its membership was almost exclusive Hakka peoples from the village of Tai Po in the New Territories. Much like the Kung Ho Association, the Tai Ping Club's objectives were to unite overseas Chinese in Britain and to provide welfare and leisure activities for its members. The Tai Ping Club showed its support for the PRC by banning gambling and mah-jong, posting pro-PRC newspaper clippings on its noticeboards, and stocking its library with communist literature. The Tai Ping Club sister association, Wah-Shing 華聲, still exists on Duke Street, Liverpool.⁴⁰¹

In addition to the Kung Ho Association and the Tai Ping Club, there was also the Chinese Mutual Aid Workers Club, which was established on Bateman Street, London, in 1920 as a pro-KMT association. Its mandate was to unite Britain's ethnic Chinese populace and improve their welfare. By the 1960s, the association offered gambling facilities and a dormitory for migrants to rent for ten shillings a week. Historians Benton and Gomez provide evidence that during this period the Workers' Club became pro-Beijing, perhaps due to the founder's radical sympathies. The association raised the PRC's five-starred flag over its headquarters and became known locally as the "Communist Club."⁴⁰² Together, these association offered support and community to ethnic Chinese workers in a country where they frequently experienced discrimination.

⁴⁰¹ Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 55-56; Shang, *The Chinese in Britain*, 37; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 246 and 412; LMA 4520/02/01/007; and Wong, *Education of Chinese Children in Britain and the USA*, 65

⁴⁰² Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 53-60; and Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 165 and 246.

Union activity and its subsequent civic association spinoffs were important bottom-up initiatives wherein ethnic Chinese migrants developed their own transnational networks that offered a mixture of self-help, ethnic and language-specific community, and shared socio-economic interests.⁴⁰³ Chinese seafarers were transnationals who organized themselves in intra-ethnic groups. They connected and knitted together the Chinese communities of Britain, Hong Kong, China, and other major world ports. Some were bonded together by their interests in the China Revolution, while others connected over British discrimination and a shared sense of alienation. While trade union activities declined post-Second World War, the local civic and transnational connections they developed played an important role in fostering a sense of community that was often friendly to the newly established PRC regime. These networks proved to be crucial to combating post-war xenophobia. They also played a key role in the unrest among the Britain's ethnic Chinese community in 1967.⁴⁰⁴

Historians Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez have described how the radical nationalism of the East River Column found its adherents among New Territories villagers during the Second World War and would, in turn, be imported to postwar Britain by Hong Kong Chinese migrants. The Hong Kong-Kowloon Brigade was formed in February 1942 at the Wong Wo Ying Church in Sai Kung under the leader Cai Guoliang, and the political advisor Chen Daming 陳達明. The Brigade's forces quickly grew from 200 to over 6,000 fighters. Zhou Yi (Chau Yick) 周奕, a senior journalist for the *Wen Wei Po*, noted how the Brigade provided sanctuary to Hong Kong Leftists who were persecuted under the Japanese occupation.⁴⁰⁵ Brigade guerrillas won the respect of New Territories villagers by protecting their lives and property from

⁴⁰³ Guarnizo and Smith, "The Locations of Transnationalism," 3-6.

⁴⁰⁴ and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 5.

⁴⁰⁵ Zhou, *Xiānggǎng zuǒpài dòuzhēng shǐ*, 16.

bandits and Japanese patrols. In addition to providing safety, the Brigade also distributing CCP propaganda among the villagers. Although the Brigade forces were pro-Communist, they had also earned the British's respect for rescuing Allied prisoners of war. In gratitude, the British asked the guerrillas to remain in the New Territories after the war to help police the region. Many members of the Brigade left Hong Kong to join Mao Zedong's forces in June 1946. In spite of their departure, the Brigade's pro-Communist values left a lasting impression among Hong Kong villagers.⁴⁰⁶

Postwar, some of the East River Column guerrillas migrated to Britain for work. For example, Lee Chi Cheung (Li Zhizhang) 李志章, a former guerrilla patriot of the PRC, migrated to Britain and became a leader within London's Chinatown. Born in the New Territories in 1932 to a low-income family, Lee witnessed the Japanese occupation firsthand. At the age of twelve he joined the guerrilla forces and became known as a "little devil." Following the war, Lee joined the Hong Kong Seamen's Union and was arrested in Australia for distributing CCP material. Lee was refused entry to Hong Kong when he tried to return. In 1959, Lee travelled to Britain and found work in an Italian restaurant. He eventually owned his own Chinese restaurants on Gerrard Street, Ilford, and Hampton Court. Although Lee became wealthy and influential, he always remained loyal to the PRC. He used his wealth and connections to improve the social welfare of his fellow ethnic Chinese migrants. Lee chaired the London Chinatown Chinese Association and led its successful bid to the Westminster Council for funding to support

⁴⁰⁶ Liang Shangyuan 梁上苑, *Zhōnggòng zài Xiānggǎng* 中共在香港 (The Chinese Communist Party in Hong Kong) (Hong Kong: Wide Angle Press, 1989), 99-104; Chen Daming 陳達明, *Dà yú shān kàng rì yóu jí duì* 大嶼山抗日游擊隊 (Lantau Island's Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Force) (Hong Kong: Universal Press, 2000), 26-27; Chow Yik 周奕, *Xiānggǎng yīngxióng érnǚ: Dōngjiāng zòngduì gǎng jiǔ dàduì kàng rì zhàn shǐ* 香港英雄兒女：東江縱隊港九大隊抗日戰史 (Heroes of Hong Kong: A History of the Anti-Japanese War Efforts by the Hong Kong-Kowloon Independent Battalion of the Dongjiang Column) (Hong Kong: Leeman Publishing, 2004), 69; and Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 250.

the arches, pagoda, Chinese telephone boxes, and Chinese street names that help distinguish London's Chinatown. Migrants like Lee, former guerrillas with Maoist allegiances, were among those who shaped the radical mood that came to a head in Britain's Chinatowns in 1967.⁴⁰⁷

Socio-Economic Issues in Britain

Britain's first Chinese diaspora communities maintained close ties with home. These two-way transnational networks sent remittances to Hong Kong while sponsoring new migrants to Britain. The post-war arrival of Hong Kong Chinese continued this tradition. They also advanced these transnational networks by drawing on new technologies. However, these networks were also threatened by post-war immigration restrictions and laws, and the introduction of a system of work vouchers and permit quotas.⁴⁰⁸

While the significance of the eastern flow of remittance has been well documented, the importance of hometown ties in ensuring the back-and-forth flow of migrants has not received the same attention. Historian Watson has shared that between 1965-1970, a New Territories emigrant needed approximately US\$500 to cover passage, clothes, and other immediate expenses. Most migrants had to borrow money from relatives at home or abroad to cover their travel expenses.⁴⁰⁹ As the District Commissioner to the New Territories reported, provided migrants were financially successful, they would travel back to Hong Kong every two to six years.⁴¹⁰ The reasons to return varied. For married migrants, it was to direct the affairs of their families. For single migrants, it might be to find a spouse. Others returned to take part in traditional Chinese festivals such as the Chinese New Year or August Moon celebrations. Others

⁴⁰⁷ LMA, 4593/02/02/03/051; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 3.

⁴⁰⁸ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 206.

⁴⁰⁹ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 87-90.

⁴¹⁰ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary, August 24, 1967.

returned to contribute to new public buildings in their local village, such as new temples or community halls, and/or to take part in village banquets honouring their return.⁴¹¹

The transnational network between the ethnic Chinese migrants in Britain and their Hong Kong Chinese friends and family was maintained through a variety of means, including the back-and-forth flow of people, communications sharing employment and travel opportunities, the flow of remittances to the New Territories, and the circulation of Hong Kong-based newspapers. Not all ethnic Chinese migrants achieved financial success as they laboured in Britain's Chinese restaurants, but most sent money home. They maintained contact with loved ones and hoped to one day return to Hong Kong. Keeping a foot in both worlds, the ethnic Chinese migrants stayed abreast of the socio-economic challenges of their home country, but they also were attune to the inequality, discrimination, and numerous social issues they experienced while living on British soil.

The British government passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962, with updates in 1968. The Commonwealth Immigrants act replaced the British Nationality Act of 1948 that conferred citizenship on all inhabitants of the Empire and the Commonwealth. The 1948 Act meant that a citizen "had the right at common law to enter the United Kingdom without let or hindrance when and where he pleased and to remain as long as he wished."⁴¹² The 1948 Act was politically expedient as British industry labour shortages necessitated an influx of immigration. Hong Kong Chinese benefitted from the Nationality Act and, for over a decade, they joined other colonial migrants in Britain. The majority of Hong Kong Chinese gravitated to the restaurant and hospitality industry. Ng's research found that, from 1955 to 1960, an average of 450 ethnic

⁴¹¹ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 144-154; Watson, "The Chinese," 207-209; and Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 83-87.

⁴¹² J.M. Evans, *Immigration Law* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1983), 34-35 and 57-58; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6.

Chinese migrants arrived in Britain from Hong Kong every year. Watson's micro-study of a specific lineage of migrants revealed that 85 to 90 percent of the able-bodied males of the New Territories' village of San Tin left for Britain between 1955 and 1962.⁴¹³ During this same period, a wave of decolonization swept the British Empire, dismantling most of British Africa and Asia. By the late 1950s, the labour shortage had shifted to a surplus and there was widespread opposition to non-Caucasian immigration. Facing mounting pressure, the Conservative Party under Harold Macmillan introduced the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act to tighten immigration requirements. The Act removed the automatic right of citizenship for Commonwealth citizens and regulated the flow of migrants from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.⁴¹⁴ While the act was meant to target Africans and South Asians in particular, its net was wide enough to also affect aspiring Hong Kong Chinese migrants.

During their British goodwill tour, the Heung Yee Kuk heard many complaints from ethnic Chinese migrants regarding the restrictive nature of the Commonwealth Immigrants Acts. The Act stipulated a quota of 8,500 from all Commonwealth countries. Another 1,000 spots were allocated for Malta, and two-thirds were reserved for skilled and professional migrants. The remaining quota of 2,500 was extremely competitive. Hong Kong Chinese could only enter Britain with an employment voucher from a sponsoring employer. Between 1962 and 1968, only 1,867 Hong Kong Chinese vouchers were approved by the British Ministry of Labour.⁴¹⁵ Based on their discussion with Chinese restaurant owners, the Kuk argued that this number did not sufficiently meet the labour demand. The Kuk also argued that since Hong Kong was one of

⁴¹³ Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 37; and James L. Watson, "Presidential Address: Virtual Kinship, Real Estate, and Diaspora Formation-The Man Lineage Revisited," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 63, no.4 (2004): 896.

⁴¹⁴ Home Office (of Great Britain), *Commonwealth Immigrants Acts 1962 and 1968*, 3; Parker, *Through Different Eyes*, 65-66; Burkett, *Constructing Post-Imperial Britain*, 1-2; and A. Sivanandan, *A Different Hunger: Writings on Black Resistance* (London: Pluto, 1982), 101-108.

⁴¹⁵ Parker, *Through Different Eyes*, 65-66.

Britain's few remaining colonies it should be granted a higher annual quota than the independent states of the Commonwealth. Besides, the Kuk argued, Britain's ethnic Chinese migrants were law-abiding and, as labourers in Chinese restaurants, they did not directly compete with native British workers.⁴¹⁶

There was a rush of Chinese Hong migrants seeking entry into Britain to "beat the ban" before the July 1962 passing of the Act. An average of 900 migrants entered Britain in 1959 and 1,250 in 1960; in the first nine months of 1961, 1,300 Hong Kong Chinese entered Britain, and by year's end, an additional 900 landed on British shores. Another 900 found their way in the first half of 1962. Hong Kong newspapers widely reported the impending immigration restrictions, and it was believed by many that it was a "now or never" opportunity to migrate to Britain. As Watson notes, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act did more to encourage emigration from Hong Kong than to discourage or curtail it.⁴¹⁷

The new voucher system transformed how ethnic Chinese migrated to Britain. In particular, it led to a further concentration of Hong Kong Chinese labourers into the catering business through chain migration, word of mouth, and family connections. The voucher system strengthened village and kinship migration chains of the New Territories by making jobs dependent on the sponsorship of an employer already in Britain. Two loopholes emerged in the immigrant act that owners of Chinese restaurants fully exploited. The first was that ethnic Chinese migrants were allowed to claim their wives and children under 16 as dependents. Although these family members were not named on the labour voucher, dependents could pass

⁴¹⁶ HKRPO, HAD 2/90/62: 77-78; TNA, FCO 30/131, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs to Officer Administering the Government of Hong Kong, 28 March 1968; and Author, (Title omitted for blind review) (2021), 6.

⁴¹⁷ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 78; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 326-327; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6

immigration control and work alongside their husbands/fathers. Dependents quickly proved to be the backbone of the Chinese restaurant labour force. Hong Kong government's Immigration Department was aware of the exploitation of this loophole. In 1968, W.E. Collard, Director of Immigration, opined that he doubted any labour shortages for Britain's Chinese restaurants and suggested that restaurant owners fabricated vacancies in order to bring relatives into Britain by the backdoor.⁴¹⁸ While workers and their families who arrived through the voucher system raised the productivity of Hong Kong Chinese-owned businesses, being tied to a single employer, and often arriving due to the grey area of loophole in the Act, also meant their employment conditions were ripe for exploitation.

The second loophole of the Act was that it only pertained to those who were considered British subjects born and raised in Hong Kong. However, a considerable proportion of Hong Kong's population were refugees from neighbouring Guangdong provinces. As "stateless aliens," Chinese refugees did not fall under the act and did not require vouchers. From 1963 to 1973, approximately 6,500 to 10,000 Chinese "aliens" found employment in Britain. Over half entered the catering industry. After five years of employment, Chinese refugees qualified for the right to live in Britain. Many Hong Kong Chinese migrants who had previously immigrated to Britain viewed the mainland refugees who arrived post-1973 as "outsiders" and "second-class" migrants who accepted lower wages and stole their jobs.⁴¹⁹ Certainly, no matter when one arrived, ethnic Chinese worked long hours (10-12 hours a day, six days a week) and, with little government interest in protecting these workers' labour rights, the possibility of exploitation and abuse was high.

⁴¹⁸ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Immigration to Hon. Colonial Secretary, July 2, 1968; and HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 10.

⁴¹⁹ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 112-114; Shang, *The Chinese in Britain*, 22-24; and Luk, *Chinatown in Britain*, 49.

The postwar restaurant and catering sector was a niche market that held employment opportunities for ethnic Chinese migrants that were not in direct competition with native British workers. The concentration of ethnic Chinese migrants in this sector provided some insulation from the racist hostility born from being a perceived economic threat by Britons and other ethnic minorities. However, the Chinese concentration in the restaurant trade also reinforced existing prejudices and stereotypes.⁴²⁰ While some scholars have argued that Chinese peoples, because of their small and concentrated numbers, were the least disliked ethnic group by the British host society that did not mean they were immune from discrimination.⁴²¹ Racist name-calling and derogatory gestures were common forms of discriminatory harassment toward ethnic Chinese restaurant workers. The restaurant trade was particularly vulnerable to “eat-and-run” customers who refused to pay and who taunted and accosted Chinese staff. Unruly drunks often caused damage and made threats when they cavorted in Chinese restaurants after the pubs closed.⁴²² On rare occasion, Chinese staff defended themselves. For example, on 5 May 1933, after several British customers refused to settle their bill at The Sunrise, in St. Helens, Lancashire, six Chinese staff took umbrage; a fight ensued involving the use of steel pipes and lumber as weapons. Brian Peace, a 24-year-old Briton died in the melee. Of the six Chinese restaurant staff arrested—Tsang Wong-yau, Tsang Koon Lin, Tsang Sung, Tsang Fon Yaw, Tsung Fat, and Le Gam Po—five were found guilty of manslaughter and received three years each. Believing the guilty got

⁴²⁰ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 128.

⁴²¹ John Solomos, *Racism and Racism in Contemporary Britain* (London: Macmillan Education, 1989); Ng, *The Chinese in London*; and Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain*.

⁴²² Ng, *The Chinese of London*, 38-41; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 128; and Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 128-129.

off lightly, a vigilante mob of 300 Britons vandalized The Sunrise and a neighbouring Chinese restaurant.⁴²³

Migrant women were also targets of misogynist and racist abuse. Chinese women working the late shifts were regularly harassed by male clientele who played on passive stereotypes. Racist name-calling, singing “Suzy Wong,” and the possibility of physical and sexual harassment was always present. The police response to such incidents was poor at best. Isolation, together with a lack of sympathy from the police, meant that the prevailing attitude foisted upon female Chinese restaurant workers was that “you just have to take it.”⁴²⁴ Some Chinese restaurants ended up employing British women as late-night waitresses or cashiers because the unruly customers were less likely to abuse or harass them.⁴²⁵

Negative stereotypes about food and hygiene were also compounded by the ghettoing of workers in the Chinese restaurant trade. Many Britons traded in insults regarding the so-called disgusting eating habits of ethnic Chinese and how they supposedly would eat any kind of animal. Racist jokes circulated about filthy kitchens and unhygienic food storage.⁴²⁶ The old racist equating of Chinese men with opium addiction, led to rumours that Chinese restaurants were fronts for drug smuggling. As historian Watson reveals, such rumours were so exaggerated as to cause the police to publicly stress how ethnic Chinese migrants were law-abiding.⁴²⁷

Similar to the accusation of opium smuggling, Chinese migrants were stereotyped as inveterate gamblers. There were, of course, gambling dens within Britain’s Chinatowns, with games that included pai gow, fantan, mah-jong, and poker. Ng notes in his 1963-1964 work that

⁴²³ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62, 25-33; “Home at Last,” *Birmingham Daily Post* (Birmingham: United Kingdom), May 7, 1963; and Rawcliffe, “Turning a New Leaf,” 6-7.

⁴²⁴ Parker, *Through Different Eyes*, 93-103.

⁴²⁵ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 129.

⁴²⁶ Parker, *Through Different Eyes*, 66-70 and 93.

⁴²⁷ Watson, “The Chinese,” 206-207.

there were seven Chinese gambling houses in London in 1963-1964, while Watson records that, in 1975, there were four large gambling establishments in the basements along Gerrard Street.⁴²⁸ Altogether, there were an estimated twenty gambling clubs across London, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Birmingham, Bristol, and Glasgow.

Gambling in 1960s Britain was legal only in a few private clubs that catered to British customers. Since they were illegal, the Chinese gambling dens kept a low profile. There were likely far more gambling dens than in either Ng or Watson's study. Although the police were aware of the illegal gambling dens, they maintained a laissez-faire attitude towards these establishments because they never caused public disturbances. The gambling dens also actively discouraged non-Chinese clients from partaking. The gambling dens staffed an average of four full-time employees who ran the games, watched the premises, and cleaned up after closing. The salaries of the gambling attendants were on par with the earnings of restaurant servers and were enough to remit an average of HK\$450 a month back to family in Hong Kong.⁴²⁹ However, since more than a few Chinese migrants lost their hard-earned incomes at the tables, gambling dens became known as a site of exploitation. The Hong Kong government reported that the average person lost roughly £200-300 daily at the illegal gambling establishments.⁴³⁰

While Britain had no laws forbidding miscegenation, relationships between Chinese men and white women often provoked racist violence in mid-century Britain. European women who married ethnic Chinese migrants were mainly from the working class. These white women were often abandoned by their families and their white communities for pursuing their romantic interests. Mixed marriages also created concern for the village members of the New Territories.

⁴²⁸ Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 63; and Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 117.

⁴²⁹ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 117-118.

⁴³⁰ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 30-32; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6.

In the eyes of village members, intermarriage not only meant the dissolving of cultural ties, but it also meant a decline in remittances.⁴³¹ In a number of instances, the marriages of male Chinese migrants with British women were not legal and/or the Chinese migrant was engaged in bigamy as he was already married by Chinese custom to a Hong Kong Chinese woman. Very few bigamy cases were ever brought up to court because it was realized that neither wife would gain anything if their husband were jailed. A thornier problem was the matter of the husband's estate following his death. A Chinese solicitor practicing in London reported that he had come across quite a few cases in which a Hong Kong wife sued a British wife over ownership over the estate. Under the 1938 Family Provision Act, a first wife was eligible to some of the estate even without being mentioned in a written will. That said, most aggrieved Hong Chinese parties wished to settle out of court rather than face British ridicule over Chinese conceptions of matrimony.⁴³²

Finally, the language barrier also presented a problem of discrimination. Most of Britain's ethnic Chinese migrants were Cantonese speaking. Many knew no English upon arrival. In the mid-1960s, fewer than one in five Chinese restaurant staff could converse in English. It was not uncommon for only the manager and senior servers to speak English. Many cooks and kitchen workers did not learn English even after years of residence in Britain. Unable to converse in English, meant that many workers were either not aware of, or unable to access, essential services.⁴³³ A lack of understanding, as was the case in St. Helens in 1963, was often a precipitating factor in violent, racist encounters. Even the dependents of restaurant workers struggled with the language barrier. Before the early-1960s, most Chinese children stayed with

⁴³¹ Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 76; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 301-305; Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 178-181; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 6.

⁴³² HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 30.

⁴³³ Watson, *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 124-125 and 193; Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 88-89; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 329-331; Parker, *Through Different Eyes*, 120-121; and Hugh D.R. Baker, "Nor Good Red Herring: The Chinese in Britain," in *China and Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ed., Yuming Shaw (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, 1986), 313.

their grandparents or mothers in Hong Kong to be raised and learn Chinese. Yet, by the mid-1960s, with more and more family members migrating to work in Britain, it became necessary for the children to attend school and learn English. At the end of March 1968, it was estimated that there were 3,436 Hong Kong students pursuing higher education in Britain and over 700 school children, although the Home Affairs Department believed this figure to be far higher.⁴³⁴ Many of these Chinese school children were placed in grades according to their age, irrespective of their academic attainment. Since the majority arrived from the New Territories with little to no English language skills, bullying and racist name-calling towards Chinese students was common. Indeed, it was reported by the Hong Kong Chinese Liaison Office that a boy of 14 was so seriously affected by bullying that he refused to attend classes. The education authorities threatened the prosecution of the father if he kept his boy out of school. The boy later received the attention of a psychiatrist.⁴³⁵

While the English language barrier and its attendant discriminations were among the challenges of the ethnic Chinese, a lack of Chinese language (Cantonese) instruction threatened cultural continuity. The Kuk was particularly concerned when they heard from many ethnic Chinese migrants how they lacked access to Cantonese instruction for their dependants. Similarly, there was a paucity of non-Communist Chinese cultural and recreational resources. Migrants went to the Chinese Mission to watch films in Cantonese, but not necessarily to fill up on Maoist propaganda.⁴³⁶ Similarly, ethnic Chinese migrants read the Hong Kong left-wing media press—the *Wen Wei Po*, the *Ta Kung Pao*, and the *New Evening Post*—not because they

⁴³⁴ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 33; and Rawcliffe, “Turning a New Leaf,” 6-7.

⁴³⁵ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, *Hong Kong Chinese Liaison, London: Half Yearly Report for the Period Ended 31st March 1967*; Wong, *Education of Chinese Children in Britain and the USA*, 63-66; and Cheng, *Education and Class*, 99-105.

⁴³⁶ HKRPO, HAD 2/90/62: 78-79; and TNA, FCO 30/131, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs to Officer Administering the Government of Hong Kong, 28 March 1968.

necessarily shared the papers' values, but because they were hungry for Cantonese stories of home. Cultural continuity was also torn asunder by the lack of non-radical leaders among them; there was no ethnic Chinese emigrant equivalent to the Kuk.⁴³⁷

As Lai surveyed Britain's ethnic Chinese communities he circulated through Chinese clubs and recreational centres; many of them were established or indirectly supported by Communists. Many were small and poorly-equipped. Still, for a few shillings, members and patrons might enjoy sharing news from Hong Kong and the PRC, play a game or two, and enjoy a cheap meal. Under the guise of being a university student, Lai was openly welcomed by the Kung Ho Association, with the greeting, "if you are Chinese, you are welcome." While there Lai read a couple of Mao-friendly papers and ate a small meal. Lai noticed Communist propaganda material, but he did not think it was what attracted visitors. Lai reasoned those who attended the pro-Beijing club might hold leftist sympathies, but what drew them through the doors was a longing for Chinese community in a foreign land.⁴³⁸

Leftist associations virtually monopolized ethnic Chinese cultural spaces. The transnational grassroots associations of the pro-communist Kung Ho Association, Tai Ping Club, Wah-Shing, and the Workers' Club proved far more successful in gaining the loyalty of Chinese abroad than their either apolitical or pro-Taipei competitors. Ethnic Chinese migrants learned to rely on these pro-communist clubs not just for their comradeship but for the support they provided to Chinese workers when they encountered discrimination and/or faced socio-economic challenges. The Kung Ho Association offered settlement advice and arranged English classes for workers. In 1962, the Workers' Club raised money for the Kuk to support flood relief in the New

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 79-80; Ibid.; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 5.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.: 23-25; and Ibid., 7.

Territories.⁴³⁹ That such support came along side an open critique of the colonial Hong Kong government likely resonated with many.⁴⁴⁰ Disconnected from home, the promotion of Chinese patriotism at these centres—by way of a Chinese propaganda film, for example—and even the touting of the CCP’s socio-economic, cultural, and educational achievements, must have cultivated a sense of pride among Britain’s ethnic Chinese community who were frequently subject to the shame of discrimination.⁴⁴¹ These left-friendly organizations and spaces played a similar role to the Leftist bookshops, banks, and cinemas in Hong Kong that mobilized support for protestors during the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots.⁴⁴²

Addressing the Socio-Economic Needs of the Hong Kong Chinese Migrants

Allowing left-leaning organizations a monopoly over meeting the socio-economic needs of Britain’s ethnic Chinese migrants was, as Lai’s survey revealed, no longer tenable or in the best interest of the British and Hong Kong governments. The shakeup of the HKGO gave new authorization to the Liaison office to set up community centres, amenity funds, a supply of popular non-radical Cantonese films and Hong Kong news reports, and pro-colonial government pamphlet materials.⁴⁴³ By mid-1970, the Liaison Office was encouraging the proliferation of Chinese associations that lacked a red tinge. In August, the Liaison Office began a fruitful collaboration with the Chamber of Chinese Commerce to offer a program of activities and recreational events for ethnic Chinese members. The Chamber of Chinese Commerce had recently elected Chan Sau-on (Tommy) as president. Chan was also the chairman of the Golden United Association and an owner of several restaurants in Middlesborough. Initially born in Tai

⁴³⁹ Shang, *The Chinese in Britain*, 37; and Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 165.

⁴⁴⁰ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present* 246; and Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 55-56.

⁴⁴¹ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 19-23; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, District Commissioner, N.T. to Hon. Colonial Secretary 24 August 1967; Ng, *The Chinese in London*, 56; and Byron Rogers, “The Strange Community of Gerrard Street,” *Telegraph Magazine* (London: United Kingdom), 1970.

⁴⁴² Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 176.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.: Recommendations, Appendix D.

Po Chan arrived in Britain in 1956. Lai had personally vouched that Chan would be a useful government contact. While Chan was considered politically neutral, the HKGO felt they could rely on him to organize social events, activities, films, and sporting events that would not be accompanied by Maoist propaganda.⁴⁴⁴ The Chamber successfully held the Mid-Autumn Festival in Middlesbrough and organized showings of Hong Kong government films with an attendance of over 100 members. On 22 September 1970, members of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, 150 community “contacts,” and the heads of the HKGO met to discuss the problems and grievances of the ethnic Chinese community at the Hong Kong House. At the gathering, HKGO head Michael Wright announced that “the London office would, in turn, try to assist the [Chinese] associations to expand their activities.” Wright went on to commend those present, by declaring that “...all of us at the Hong Kong Office are appreciative of the efforts you have made.”⁴⁴⁵

Numerous colony-friendly Hong Kong Chinese associations emerged across Britain’s major cities in the first half of 1971. The Liaison Officer and Assistant Liaison Officer attended the inauguration of the new Hong Kong Chinese association in Newcastle on 16 January; other associations soon cut tape in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Perth, and Liverpool. These cultural organizations were especially praised for their efforts to develop activities for the local ethnic Chinese community, organize film showings, and sponsor youth sports.⁴⁴⁶ The HKGO, in cooperation with the Hong Kong government, Hong Kong Radio, and Redifusion Reditune Limited, supplied Chinese restaurant owners and associations with a monthly supply of

⁴⁴⁴ HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Quarterly Report of the Liaison Section, July-September 1970, 4; and HKRPO, , HAD 2/90/62: 87.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.; HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, Hong Kong Chinese Communities in Britain: Growth of Associations Welcomed, 22 September 1970; and Benton, “Chinatown UK v. Colonial Hong Kong,” 339.

⁴⁴⁶ HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Quarterly Report of the Liaison Section, January-March 1971, 2-4.

Cantonese films and records, pro-colonial to politically neutral Hong Kong newspapers, and English-lesson gramophones to subscribers at a nominal fee.⁴⁴⁷ Well into the 1980s, the Liaison Office encouraged and assisted in the formation of Chinese associations, and even helped fund Chinese celebrations, such as the Dragon Dance performance as the London Stores Parade and the annual Chinese Lunar New Year event held in Soho.⁴⁴⁸

As per Lai's suggestion, the Liaison Office sought to advance the interests of ethnic Chinese emigrants. Historians Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez question how much HKGO officials really pushed against the Commonwealth Immigrations Act 1968 and the revised 1971 Immigration Act. Both Acts significantly reduced Commonwealth employment voucher quotas; as a result, the number of Hong Kong Chinese workers arriving in Britain declined by 40% to a mere 480 per year. Chinese restaurant owners were deeply aggravated by these reductions and worried about staff shortages. Therefore, Benton and Gomez's critique is fair, but the HKGO was also a minor player within the political sphere of the British Commonwealth. As a subbranch of the Hong Kong government, it lacked the leverage to challenge a series of acts passed by an increasingly inward-looking British government.⁴⁴⁹

The HKGO also attempted to counteract the popularity and ubiquity of Maoist Cantonese film screenings. Until late 1969, anti-communist film clubs had been strong-armed out of business by pro-Maoist Chinese, who labelled such club owners as "running dogs of the Hong Kong government." Stephen Wong Lap-kwong, the owner of the Lan Chow Restaurant of

⁴⁴⁷ HKRPO, HKRS41-2-845, Attention News Editors, 11 June 1969; HKRPO, Ibid., 29 January 1970; and Ibid., Hong Kong Chinese Communities in Britain: Growth of Associations Welcomed, 22 September 1970.

⁴⁴⁸ HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, The Trade Development Council, 22 April 1971; Ibid., Lunar New Year Reception in London, 23 February 1972; Shang, *The Chinese in Britain*, 48-51; HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Quarterly Report of the Liaison Section, January-March 1972: 6; and Venetia Newell, "A Note on the Chinese New Year Celebration in London and Its Socio-Economic Background," *Western Folklore* 48, no. 1 (1989): 63-64.

⁴⁴⁹ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 252; HKRPO, HKRS41-2-845, Quarterly Report of Liaison Section: October-December 1971: 2.

Norwich, complained he lost £3,000 in six months in 1968 because Chinese Leftists had intimidated his customers. In reaction, Wong contacted the Hong Kong government colonial secretary to propose they supply him with Cantonese films, and he would organize screenings in venues in London, Norwich, Liverpool, and Newcastle at the admission price of five to seven shillings. Months later the government rejected his proposal because the revamped HKGO decided to schedule film screenings themselves.⁴⁵⁰ The HKGO organized fifteen film screenings in October 1969, eleven in November, and thirty-one in December. Admission was free; expenses were covered by the Hong Kong government. These films were a mixture of popular Cantonese feature films and newsreels about Hong Kong. All served the dual function of regulated entertainment and propaganda. They were offered to convince viewers of the benefits of capitalism and the chaos brought on by the Cultural Revolution.⁴⁵¹ In addition to offering free pro-capitalist film screening the British and Hong Kong governments sought to restrict the distribution and screenings of pro-Communist Cantonese films. In 1970, the HKGO showed 262 movies with an average audience of 40 in over 400 restaurants and hired halls.⁴⁵²

The HKGO also invested in English and Chinese language instruction. In 1970, the HKGO offered a new library service where the ethnic Chinese migrants could borrow records that played English language lessons. The British educational system lagged behind the United States in its provisions for English as Second Language (ESL) students. It was not until the early

⁴⁵⁰ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Wong to Colonial Secretary, 25 July 1968; HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretary to Woo, 10 September, 10 September 1968; and HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Colonial Secretary to Wong, 27 September 1968.

⁴⁵¹ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 57-58; HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Hong Kong Government Office: Information Section, October-December 1969; and HKRPO, HKMS233-2-21.

⁴⁵² Ibid.; HKRPO, Hong Kong Government: Information Section, January-March 1972; HKRPO, CR 9/5215/56; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 253; and Chang, *Screening Communities*, 46-71.

1980s that ESL programming was offered within a few London-based state school.⁴⁵³ While the HKGO could not intervene directly with the British Department of Education, it had advocated as early as 1966 for the BBC to provide Chinese-language entertainment and English-language programs tailored to the ethnic Chinese community's audiences, only to be told the audience was too small.⁴⁵⁴ Eventually, the HKGO-funded private English-language courses for Chinese students called "English by Post." They based the curriculum on the BBC program "Calling All Beginners," which was immensely popular with emigrants from India and Pakistan. The curriculum was first rolled out in early 1970; 75 students enrolled within days of posting application forms. Students were lent a Chinese-English textbook, a pronunciation practice record, and 12 instructional records over the four-week course. By the end of 1971, the HKGO was also sponsoring Neighbourhood English Classes at a location on Gerrard Street, where they offered two English-language lessons weekly to Chinese students.⁴⁵⁵

Before the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968, most ethnic Chinese parents either left their children in Hong Kong or shipped them back to be educated. However, the Act stipulated both parents must reside in Britain for their children to join them. While the arrival of family dependents helped alleviate labour shortages in many Chinese restaurants, it also meant these same dependents would be legally required to attend British schools. This meant that parents could no longer access Chinese language education for their children. Parents of Britain's Chinatowns were deeply concerned that this loss would cause breakdowns in parent-child relationships and erode traditional Chinese culture and values. Because most of Britain's ethnic

⁴⁵³ Wong, *Education of Chinese Children in Britain and the USA*, 29-47 and 112; Cheng, *Education and Class*: 108-122; and *Chinese Community in Britain: The Government Reply to the Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1984-85, HC 101-I* (London: H.M.S.O., 1985), 3-11.

⁴⁵⁴ HKPRO, NT 1/2120/62c, Director of Broadcasting to District Commissioner, New Territories, 16 June 1966.

⁴⁵⁵ HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, Library Service of English on Records, 27 July 1970; and HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Quarterly Report of Liaison Section, October-December 1971: 4.

Chinese community were from Hong Kong and neighbouring Guangdong province, Cantonese was the primary lingua franca that most parents wanted their children to learn.

To mitigate parents' concerns, the HKGO, with the support of Local Education Authorities (LEA), Chinese associations, and a handful of local Hong Kong Chinese teachers, organized Chinese supplementary schools to improve Chinese language education within the community. Classes were generally held on weekends, although some schools held private classes during the week. The HKGO provided small grants for expenses, textbooks, and Cantonese lessons, although most schools supplemented the grants by charging an annual tuition fee of £10-£30.⁴⁵⁶ One of the first schools to receive support from the HKGO was the Chinese Chamber of Commerce Chinese School on Frith Street, Soho. The Frith Street school opened in 1968 with 20 pupils. By 1978 enrollment had increased to 600, rising to over 900 by 1984. The school was well-equipped with a library. It was operated by seven fully qualified Hong Kong Chinese teachers. Cantonese was the primary language taught. Courses were offered from 5 PM-7 PM on weekdays and all-day weekends. Mandarin instruction was available to more advanced students. The Frith Street school was exceptional; most HKGO-funded Chinese schools were small, often located on Chinese associations' premises, and staffed by university students or volunteers.

Parents were satisfied that their children had access to at least basic Chinese language skills instruction as well as a modest education in Chinese culture.⁴⁵⁷ From a total of seven Chinese supplementary schools in 1974, between 1975 and 1979 another twenty-four schools were established, and another twenty-five from 1979 to 1982. That seventy-one percent of Chinese supplementary schools were founded in the late 1970s to early 1980s suggest a growing

⁴⁵⁶ Wong, *Education of Chinese Children in Britain and the USA*, 31, 39, and 71.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid., 71-73; and Shang, *The Chinese in Britain*, 51-52.

Chinese student population, and the continued commitment of the HKGO to support the identified needs of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Interestingly, Britain's Chinatowns also supported educational improvements back home. In 1976 the ethnic Chinese community raised £20,000 for the development of the Kung Fai School.⁴⁵⁸ The HKGO played an essential role in keeping the Cantonese language alive in the community. Although the HKGO never established a proper Chinese-language school, it nonetheless sponsored Chinese associations to develop classes that helped preserve the Cantonese identity.⁴⁵⁹

One of the most prolific pro-Beijing Chinese associations, the Kung Ho Association, also opened the Kung Ho Association Chinese School in 1968, at roughly the same time as the HKGO reorganization. According to Lornita Yuen-fan Wong's informant, the classes were held in a basement in Chinatown Soho. Initially, only six to seven students enrolled in these classes. Instruction included lessons on the Chinese (Mandarin) language, and the study of the political thought of Chairman Mao Zedong via a review of the Little Red Book.⁴⁶⁰ While Wong credits the Kung Ho Association school for spearheading the demand for Chinese language education, this seems doubtful given the low student enrollment.

Educational improvements for the ethnic Chinese migrants were actually advanced by the HKGO's revamped student section. By the end of 1969, the number of postsecondary students attending British universities and colleges totalled 4,523, with most students pursuing either General Certificate of Education (GCE) (1,329), nursing (967), or engineering (454) degrees.⁴⁶¹ The total number of Hong Kong students studying in Britain increased to 4,800 in 1970. That

⁴⁵⁸ HKPRO, HKRS870-8-1932, Liaison with UK Chinese Communities Under Review, 23 June 1976; HKRPO, HKRS41-2-845, Quarterly Report of Liaison Office, October-December 1971: 1-2; and Wong, *Education of Chinese Children*, 67.

⁴⁵⁹ Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 12.

⁴⁶⁰ Wong, *Education of Chinese Children*, 65-66.

⁴⁶¹ HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Hong Kong Government Office, Students Section, October-December 1969.

year, 110 students visited the HKGO's student office; among the most common inquiries were regarding access to the Students' Amenities Fund and support in identifying career opportunities in Hong Kong for graduates.⁴⁶²

Near the end of 1971, the Hong Kong Students Centre was restaffed, and the Centre began offering accommodations to 192 students (126 men, 66 women) who had been unable to find private lodging. Lodging included a bed and breakfast system wherein the HKGO purchased residents' breakfasts and provided limited affordable lunches and dinners. Cantonese films were made available free of charge in the common room. Recreational activities for residents—horse riding, barbecues, table tennis tournaments—were organized by the HKGO in conjunction with student associations. In October 1971, Governor MacLehose and Administrative Commissioner Wright were honoured guests of the students' centre.⁴⁶³ By 1972, the HKGO students section began offering counselling services for students to lessen culture shock, treat mental health struggles, and address financial challenges. In its first months of operation, 132 students availed themselves of the counselling services. A total of £80 was awarded to eight students as grants, another £30 was granted to two students as hardship loans, and £360 was distributed to fifteen university Chinese Societies as grants to support Hong Kong students. While the HKGO endeavoured to make the stay of Hong Kong students in Britain more comfortable, they did not intervene to support Chinese-language learning in the universities.

As early as the spring 1965, Lord Chalfont, Minister of State at the British Foreign Office, sought to establish a centre of Contemporary China Studies in London. That same year, the Committee for Research and Development in Modern Languages explored the idea of establishing an Inter-University Chinese Language School among several British universities to

⁴⁶² Ibid., Hong Kong Government Office, Student Section, January-March 1970.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., Hong Kong Government Office, Student Section, October-December 1971

improve British Chinese-language skills. Their efforts were shelved in 1969. Instead, in 1967, a Ford Foundation grant of \$345,000 sparked the creation of the Contemporary China Institute within the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). The grant covered the first four years of operation and came with a promised additional three-year grant of \$175,000. Thus, while the HKGO helped to facilitate and grow Chinese-language learning for private schools, the American Ford Foundation helped establish and improve contemporary China studies and modern Chinese language learning at the postsecondary level.⁴⁶⁴

Impact and Legacy of the HKGO's New Policy

By the mid-1970s, the revamped HKGO had met most of its initial objectives. Its London and Liverpool offices could now boast of a staff of 120 all under the purview of Commissioner S.T. Kidd, the former District Commissioner of the New Territories. Under Kidd's direction, the HKGO purview was maintained and expanded. The HKGO liaised with British and Hong Kong government officials, improved its services and information sharing with the Britain's ethnic Chinese community, advanced educational offerings and student supports, and promoted Hong Kong colonial and commercial interests. Additional staff increased the HKGO's budget by £41,134, on top of the already existing expense of £74,217. The HKGO operational budget increase to over £750,000 (HK\$6,500,000) in 1977 with the opening of sub-offices in Manchester and Edinburgh.⁴⁶⁵ These expenses supported services that were designed to win the

⁴⁶⁴ TNA, ED 181/122, Proposal for the Establishment of a Research Unit, 20 February 1969; TNA, ED 181/122, Senior to Nisbet, 12 March 1969; and Priscilla Roberts, "Rebuilding a Relationship: British Cultural Diplomacy towards China, 1967-80," in *British Propaganda and Wars of Empire: Influencing Friend and Foe 1900-2010*, eds., Greg Kennedy and Christopher Tuck (London: Ashgate, 2014), 197.

⁴⁶⁵ HKPRO, HKRS877-1-91, Report on the Hong Kong Government Office in London, Kidd, August 1974; HKPRO, HKRS870-8-1932, House of Commons, 15 November 1976; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 10.

support of Britain's ethnic Chinese community and construct a colonial-friendly Hong Kong identity.⁴⁶⁶

The HKGO supported the growth of Chinese associations across Britain; non-Communist Chinese associations increased substantially in the latter half of the 1970s and into the 1980s. On 3 November 1976, the HKGO Commissioner Kidd joined Liverpool's Lord Mayor Raymond Craine at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Merseyside Chinese Centre. At the event, Kidd acknowledged that "there has been a missing link between them [ethnic Chinese] and the host society [Britons]...with the founding of your centre, I am confident that this gap will be securely bridged." The Merseyside Chinese Centre was yet another strategic HKGO start-up inaugurated to counterbalance the Maoist-influenced Chinese association Wah-Shing 華聲 in Liverpool.⁴⁶⁷ In 1984, the HKGO celebrated the founding of Newcastle's Chinatown and the Northeast Chinese Association. The community credited Sir Jack Cater, the new Commissioner of the HKGO, for the government's promotion of "Hong Kong in Britain."⁴⁶⁸ Thus, the HKGO proved instrumental in forming Chinese associations in Britain that promoted Chinese cultural activities, trade, and business as an alternative to left-wing Chinese associations. The HKGO helped create, support or promote upwards to ninety-seven Chinese associations in central city centres by the mid-1980s.⁴⁶⁹ While not all of these Chinese associations survived into the twenty-first century, some, like the London Chinatown Association, London Chinese Community Centre, and the

⁴⁶⁶ Mark Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-92* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 144-145; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 11.

⁴⁶⁷ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 246; HKRS870-8-1932, Inauguration of Merseyside Chinese Centre, 3 November 1976.

⁴⁶⁸ HKRPO, HKRS870-8-1934, Sir Jack Cater meets Chinese Community in Newcastle, 20 March 1984.

⁴⁶⁹ Hugh D.R. Baker, "Branches All Over: The Hong Kong Chinese in the United Kingdom," in *Reluctant Exiles?: Migration from Hong Kong and the New Overseas Chinese*, eds., Ronald Skeldon and Xiaohu (Shawn) Wang (London: Routledge, 1994), 302.

North East Chinese Associations remain active to this day. The legacy of these cultural hubs reflects positively on the early support and encouragement of the HKGO.⁴⁷⁰

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, economic and social reform finally came to Hong Kong under the direction of Governor MacLehose. During this period, the colony's industrial-based economy expanded into a global finance centre. Under MacLehose, the colony implemented a new housing program, free primary and secondary education, new social welfare services, and the expansion of medical and health benefits.⁴⁷¹

At the same time, the end of the 99-year lease of the New Territories in 1997 loomed ever nearer. While there had been friction between the governments of Britain and Hong Kong during the 1960s and 1970s over issues such as support for Chinese refugees, textile exports, defence contributions, and sterling reserves, by the 1980s, Britain, under a Thatcher administration emboldened by the Falklands War, hoped to either renew the Hong Kong lease or, at the least, maintain administrative rule over the colony after being emboldened by the victory in the Falklands War. Deng Xiaoping quickly put that idea to rest, leaving the British government with nothing more to do than try to negotiate the best terms of transfer. The resulting Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 committed the PRC to offering Hong Kong a "high degree of autonomy" for fifty years following the PRC's resumption of sovereignty.⁴⁷² As the transfer edged nearer, the HKGO's future looked uncertain. Perhaps this was the reason why the British

⁴⁷⁰ LMA 4593/02/02/03/051, 5-7; Rosemary Sales, Alessio d'Angelo, Xiuqing Liang, and Nicola Montagna, "London's Chinatown: Branded Place or Community Space?," in *Branding Cities: Cosmopolitanism, Parochialism, and Social Change*, eds., Stephanie Donald, Eleonore Kofman, and Catherine Kevin, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 51.

⁴⁷¹ Chi-kwan Mark, "Crisis or Opportunity? Britain, China, and the Decolonization of Hong Kong in the Long 1970s," in *China, Hong Kong, and the Long 1970s: Global Perspectives*, eds., Priscilla Roberts and Odd Arne Westad, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 264; Ray Yep and Tai-lok Lui, "Revisiting the Golden Era of MacLehose and the Dynamics of Social Reforms," *China Information* 24, no. 3 (2010): 251.

⁴⁷² Mark, "Crisis or Opportunity?," 258-264 Yep and Lui, "Revisiting the Golden Era of MacLehose and the Dynamics of Social Reforms," 256; Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 256; and Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97*, 187.

Home Affairs Committee session of 1984-1985 failed to report on the work of the HKGO in supporting Britain's ethnic Chinese community.⁴⁷³ The HKGO's student section's work had been in decline since 1979 after Hong Kong Chinese university enrollment decreased owing to a decision that exempted European Economic Community (EEC) students from increased tuition fees, but not those from the colony. The Hong Kong government reported that Hong Kong student visas to Britain dropped by forty-two percent in 1980.⁴⁷⁴ By the early 1990s, Chinese supplementary schools across Britain were preparing for the end of HKGO funding before the 1997 handover.⁴⁷⁵ In other areas of interest, the HKGO slowly shed its functions and responsibilities, offloading them to Chinese community centres and associations. In July 1997, the HKGO was renamed the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) and was charged with promoting Hong Kong's economic and trade interests. The HKETO continues to maintain informal ties and sponsorship for Chinese associations across Britain.⁴⁷⁶

The changes in the operation of the HKGO following Lai's survey and recommendations effectively stymied the influence of Communism and unrest among Britain's ethnic Chinese communities. The HKGO promoted a pro-colony, Hong Kong identity. The Hong Kong government believed that the 1968 so-called "Battle of Portland Place" had reduced the popularity of the Chinese Mission as evinced by the decline in attendance at the PRC's National Day celebration on 1 October 1967.⁴⁷⁷ Over the next few years, the HKGO met most of its objectives. The increase in funding and support across Britain by the HKGO minimized the possibility of Britain's Chinatowns from being influenced by the Chinese Mission.

⁴⁷³ *Chinese Community in Britain: The Government Reply to the Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1984-85.*

⁴⁷⁴ Hampton, *Hong Kong and British Culture, 1945-97*, 164-165.

⁴⁷⁵ Wong, *Education of Chinese Children*, 156.

⁴⁷⁶ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 254-255.

⁴⁷⁷ HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 19.

As Gregor Benton and Edmund Terence Gomez point out, the HKGO failed to convince all of Britain's ethnic Chinese residents of the government's good faith and approachability; many continued to look to other agencies such as the Overseas Chinese Service even after the HKGO changed its policies.⁴⁷⁸ However, HKGO interventions were not insignificant and it did effectively perpetuate a distinct pro-colony, Hong Kong identity. As John Carroll points out, as early as the 1800s, wealthy Chinese in Hong Kong proudly identified as permanent residents of the British colony and as a special kind of Chinese, separate from their counterparts on the mainland. This sense of belonging became even stronger after the 1911 Republican Revolution and the revolutionary nationalism of the 1920s.⁴⁷⁹ However, most scholars agree that in the aftermath of the 1967 Leftist Riots, non-affluent Hong Kong residents also began to identify more closely with the colonial apparatus. This identification was not a top-down imposition but a sense of belonging shaped by a negative response to the 1967 Leftist Riots, and an appreciation for the colony's economic rise, the close ties with Britain, the PRC, the United States, and Japan, and the efforts of the Hong Kong government to foster a sense of local identity. The reform policy of Trench accelerated under MacLehose, and the rapid improvement in living standards and conditions altered negative government perceptions and led to the rise of a vibrant local culture.⁴⁸⁰ Cantonese films such as *Road Show* and *Hong Kong Style* and newspapers such as the *Hong Kong News Digest* and *The Star* detailing Hong Kong's new housing and social programs renewed public confidence in the British and Hong Kong governments. Pro-colonial media also gave citizens encouragement to celebrate Hong Kong's free market, stability, and security as positives of British rule and capitalism. These same media sources spun the spectre of

⁴⁷⁸ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 253-254.

⁴⁷⁹ Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 167.

⁴⁸⁰ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 190-192.

communism and the Cultural Revolution as bringing to Hong Kong only chaos and instability.⁴⁸¹ While the Kuk's goodwill tour and Lai's report found that many residents of Britain's Chinatowns, including the young and old, were dissatisfied and frustrated with the Hong Kong government, they nonetheless treasured their home of Hong Kong and were won over by the better living conditions provided by British society.⁴⁸²

Historian Gary Cheung argues that the Hong Kong Leftists paid a heavy price for instigating the riots once the campaign shifted from industrial, social, and labour issues to purely political agitation. The general and food strikes caused massive public inconvenience, and the bomb attacks completely undermined the image of a peaceable left-wing. In the end, Cheung argues the riots set back Maoist organizing efforts in Hong Kong well after they subsided. Students, particularly university students, who had been sympathetic to the Leftist cause, lost their enthusiasm for Maoist propaganda. Patriotism, not ardent support for the Cultural Revolution had animated Hong Kong student involvement. Despite the end of the active phase of the Cultural Revolution by the Ninth Congress of the CCP in April 1969, the eventual acceptance of the PRC as a great power had driven blind patriotism toward "Mother China" for many Hong Kong students. After the end of the active phase of the Cultural Revolution at the Ninth CCP Congress in April 1969, some of the horrors unleashed by the Cultural Revolution came to light, including the "Anti-Lin Biao and Anti-Confucius campaign," further disillusioning the remaining Maoist-sympathizers.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ HKPRO, HKRS70-3-137, Attention New Editors, 11 June 1969; HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Hong Kong Government Office, Information Section, October-December 1969; and HKPRO, HKRS41-2-845, Hong Kong Government Office, Information Section, October-December 1971.

⁴⁸² HKPRO, HAD 2/90/62: 19-34; and Rawcliffe, "Turning a New Leaf," 12-13.

⁴⁸³ Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong*, 191.

As Maoism in Hong Kong faltered, the colonial government actively promoted an anti-Red Hong Kong identity. Matthew Turner and Yan Shufen 顏淑芬 note that “it was not until 1967 that the rhetoric of ‘citizenship,’ of ‘community,’ and ‘belonging’ was first deployed on a grand scale as anti-communist counterpropaganda. By the end of the sixties a local and largely unarticulated sense of identity began to emerge in Hong Kong.”⁴⁸⁴ This identity was also cultivated among Hong Kong Chinese emigrants in Britain. One of the most important initiatives by the British and Hong Kong governments was their support for Cantonese language instruction and to cultivate the growth and maintenance of Chinese associations across Britain. These interventions were meant to influence ethnic Chinese migrants on colonial achievements, provide colony-friendly Hong Kong news and cultural information, alleviate some of the racial discrimination ethnic Chinese faced, and foster a Hong Kong identity. In so doing, the British and Hong Kong governments catered to Britain’s ethnic Chinese community’s specific Cantonese language and cultural needs in oppositional ways to similar efforts by Beijing and Taipei.

By 1970, it was clear that London’s Chinatown had changed. Ng Kwee Choo, the author of *The Chinese in London*, commented on how he was shocked by the development of Gerrard Street after his four-year absence (1966-1970). Britain’s Chinatowns sent newspapers, books, crockery, music, foodstuffs, and over £2 million in remittance to the colony. The Guanghai Bookshop and the Tung Po Export Agency, both along Gerrard Street, profited from the sale of Hong Kong photograph albums, Cantonese pop records, children’s books, and newspapers. The

⁴⁸⁴ Matthew Turner and Yan Shufen 顏淑芬, *Xiānggǎng liùshí niándài: Shēnfēn, wénhuà rèntóng yǔ shèjì* 香港六十年代：身分，文化認同與設計 (Hong Kong in the 1960s: Identity, Cultural Identity, and Design) (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Arts Centre, 1995), 2-34.

Chinese restaurant trade continued to flourish.⁴⁸⁵ Despite the restrictions of the Commonwealth immigration laws, Hong Kong Chinese migrants continued to access Britain through Chinese restaurateur sponsorships.⁴⁸⁶ Chinese migration became more diversified in the 1980s as the PRC opened to the world under Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms. As a result, Mandarin was more frequently heard in Britain's Chinatowns. That said, Cantonese continues to a prominent language within Britain's Chinatowns, as approximately two-thirds of Chinese in Britain still speak Cantonese as a first language.⁴⁸⁷ The reforms enacted by the HKGO outlived the office itself. It is true that the HKGO did not win over the political loyalty of all ethnic Chinese migrants. However, the British and Hong Kong governments catered to the ethnic Chinese community's specific Cantonese language populations in ways the Chinese Mission or the PRC would never have done and, in doing so, helped to foster a distinct Hong Kong identity in both Chinese communities in Britain and Hong Kong. Benton and Gomez quote a Chinese witness who observed that "the native residents of the New Territories, cold-shouldered in the 1950s, became the darlings of the 1970s and 1980s."⁴⁸⁸

Conclusion

This chapter explores how Lai's survey and the Kuk's goodwill tour kickstarted significant reforms to the HKGO that were designed to address socio-economic grievances and quiet the unrest that spread to the metropole following the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots. The British and Hong Kong governments needed to foster leadership and a pro-colonial Hong Kong

⁴⁸⁵ "London's Chinatown is Busy and Growing," *The New York Times*, August 31, 1970, 14; Bryon Rogers, "The Strange Community on Gerrard Street," *Telegraph Magazine*, 1970, 9; and Ng, *The Chinese in London*.

⁴⁸⁶ "London's Chinatown is Busy and Growing," *The New York Times*, August 31, 1970, 14; and Watson, *Emigration and Chinese Lineage*, 119-120

⁴⁸⁷ Mandarin and Hakka are the second and third most spoken Chinese languages in Britain. See Jak Cambria, "Overseas Chinese in UK," *Chinatownology*, June 8, 2010, accessed November 10, 2022, https://www.chinatownology.com/overseas_chinese_uk.html.

⁴⁸⁸ Benton and Gomez, *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present*, 253.

identity in the ethnic Chinese migrant community. Chinese peoples encountered discrimination in Britain from the moment they first settled there in the eighteenth century. By the early 20th-century, many Chinese seafarers gravitated to left-wing politics and found solidarity in Chinese trade unions. Chinese trade unions declined in the postwar period. However, this labour/left culture provided the framework for pro-Beijing associations, which offered the ethnic Chinese migrants an escape from British society and the opportunity to learn about home.

Lai and the Kuk identified many of the socio-economic issues Britain's ethnic Chinese community faced throughout the 1960s. The Commonwealth Immigration Acts impacted the flow of Hong Kong Chinese migrants who sought employment in Britain's Chinese restaurant trade. Lai discovered that a lack of pro-colonial leadership in the community meant that many migrants found themselves drawn into the orbit of pro-Beijing associations and the Chinese Mission. Many ethnic Chinese migrants turned towards the Chinese Mission and leftist associations, not for ideological conviction but out of boredom, inequalities, and the indignities of life spent on British soil.

The British and Hong Kong governments acted on this information and transformed the HKGO to better serve Britain's ethnic Chinese community. The HKGO helped set up non-Communist associations and recreational activities for the community. The HKGO expanded its student section to help educate and re-integrate Hong Kong youth for employment in the colony. While the HKGO could do little to address the quota restrictions in the Commonwealth Immigration Acts, ethnic Chinese migrants found loopholes in the system to allow dependents to join them and provide additional hands in the Chinese restaurant trade. Unfortunately, neither the British nor Hong Kong governments did much to resolve the racist discrimination many faced in Chinatowns. Among the HKGO's most important initiatives were its efforts to preserve the

Cantonese language and foster the idea of a distinct Hong Kong identity. In doing so, they expounded on the benefits of capitalism and security over the chaos of the PRC and the Cultural Revolution. In response to the 1967 unrest and the need to secure the continued flow of remittance, the British and Hong Kong governments sought to preserve the stability of Britain's ethnic Chinatowns. The legacy of HKGO interventions is readily apparent as a specific Hong Kong Chinese Cantonese culture is vibrant and alive in Britain's Chinatowns to this day.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

In 2021, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson thanked Hong Kong Chinese migrants and their descendants for their contributions to the nation: “On behalf of the whole country, I want to say how glad we are to have you here and how proud we are that you have chosen the UK to live.”⁴⁸⁹ Johnson’s warm greeting obfuscates the mixed reception Hong Kong Chinese migrants received over the past two centuries from native Britons. That Johnson’s message was also a back-handed critique of the PRC heavy-handed response to protests against its authority in Hong Kong a year earlier, also conveniently glosses over how, not much more than a half-century ago, Hong Kong was wracked with protests against Britain’s inconsistent colonial rule. In 1967 the former British colony faced significant riots against the colonial regime that spilled over into Britain’s Chinatowns.

This dissertation has endeavoured to show that the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots and the PRC’s Cultural Revolution had a transnational impact on Britain’s ethnic Chinese community. The transnational aspects of this unrest in the colony and the metropole involved influences from the middle. Grassroots movements from below, including pro-Maoist Chinatown associations, the Hong Kong Struggle Committee, and the Heung Yee Kuk, played a central role in the unrest and its aftermath. Equally important were actors from above, including the PRC and its international branches, and the strategic interventions of the British and Hong Kong governments. This dissertation applies and integrates Michael Peter Smith and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo’s theory of “transnationalism from below” and “transnationalism from above” as a guide to understanding “transnationalism from the middle” to understand how the Leftist Riots

⁴⁸⁹ Prime Minister’s Office, 10 Downing Street, “Prime Minister meets Hong Kong BN(O) Families who have come to the UK,” British Government Press Release, March 19, 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-meets-hong-kong-bno-families-who-have-come-to-the-uk-19-march-2021>, accessed August 14, 2022.

and the Cultural Revolution were transmitted from the PRC and Hong Kong to Britain's Chinatowns through a hybrid process of cross-border grassroots migrant initiatives and the institutional policies of the CCP and the British and Hong Kong governments.⁴⁹⁰ The more recent Hong Kong protests challenging the PRC's attempts to quiet dissent also echo a transnational exchange "from the middle." The combination of anti-Chinese prejudice and soft power initiatives to influence Overseas Chinese in favour of the Chinese state is a continuous theme in modern Chinese history and is not limited to Xi Jinping's PRC.

The study of the influence and impact of the Hong Kong 1967 Leftist Riots and the Cultural Revolution upon Britain's Chinatowns sheds light on the complex interplay of transnationalism from grassroots movements, including Chinese associations, newspapers, and film events, with that of the social experience of top-down political actors, from the Chinese Mission to the HKGO. Following Hong Kong's 1967 Leftist Riots breaking, certain ethnic Chinese migrants of Britain became radicalized, embraced Mao Zedong Thought, and openly supported the Leftist Rioters.

Hong Kong has long played a significant role as a centre of Chinese migration to Britain and as the locus for an important transnational economic network of family remittance. The first Chinese migrants to call England home came as sailors. In the second wave of Chinese migration following the end of the Second World War, most migrants arrived to work in the burgeoning Chinese restaurant and catering sector. During this period, the impact of Britain's imperial decline and larger Cold War dynamics were evident. Political and social events that affected the PRC and Hong Kong had a transnational impact on the lived experiences of ethnic Chinese migrants. Strategically promoted by the PRC government to the Chinese populace abroad,

⁴⁹⁰ Smith and Eduardo, "The Locations of Transnationalism," 1-8.

Maoism gained traction with some within Britain's ethnic Chinese community, especially among those who experienced inequality and discrimination under British rule. Racism and the failure of the British and Hong Kong governments to address Hong Kong migrants' socio-economic concerns created a fertile environment for leftist and anti-colonial opinions to thrive.

Grassroots associations played an important role in establishing and maintaining a bottom-up transnational network between the Chinese communities of Britain and Hong Kong. Homeland ties were created as far back as the late nineteenth century, when settled Chinese seafarers sent remittances back to their families in Hong Kong and China. The flow of people, money, and ideas ensured a thick network between the Chinese communities of Britain and Hong Kong. In both the colony and the metropole emerged specific grievances towards British rule. In Hong Kong, citizens faced a housing crisis, a lack of social welfare, and an indifferent colonial government. In Britain, Chinese emigrants experienced discrimination, a language barrier, and a lack of leisure activities. In Hong Kong, leftist sympathies grew among members of the populace and eventually exploded in 1967 during the Leftist Riots. In Britain, pro-Beijing associations emerged from left-wing Chinese trade unions and from the CCP and the PRC's subsequent founding in 1949. Many Chinese associations did not hide their political allegiance to Beijing. They provided welfare, activities, and a place to escape British discrimination. They also distributed Maoist propaganda and Leftist newspapers, setting the stage for unrest in Britain's Chinatowns.

Two grassroots movement organizations likewise played a crucial transnational role before, during, and after the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns: the Struggle Committee (supported by the PRC government) and the Heung Yee Kuk (supported by the Hong Kong government). The Struggle Committee raised funds and sympathy for the Leftist rioters. The Heung Yee Kuk

sought to quiet the unrest and gain political leverage in the New Territories by addressing the needs of the Hong Kong Chinese. The Struggle Committee, including its London chapter, did much to inform the ethnic Chinese migrants of the events transpiring in Hong Kong in 1967 from a Leftist viewpoint. For much of 1967, the British and Hong Kong government remained conspicuously silent. A Heung Yee Kuk delegation went on a goodwill tour of Britain's Chinatowns in early 1968 with a pacifying, pro-colonial message, while lending an ear to the particular socio-economic concerns of Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Coming from both sides of the conflict, these transnational "from below" grassroots movements sought to influence Britain's Chinese ethnic migrants through their bottom-up and across border connections to individuals and civil society.⁴⁹¹

State actors and their respective state-run agencies also played a key role in the events that shook Hong Kong and Britain in the late 1960s. The PRC's transnational agencies filled real needs in Britain's Chinatowns, needs that had been overlooked by the British and Hong Kong governments. Before 1967, Beijing and Taipei had long been engaged in a tense propaganda war to win the "hearts and minds" of Overseas Chinese communities, which included Britain's ethnic Chinese community. Following Sino-Soviet Split and the intensification of the Cold War, the PRC doubled its efforts to propagate Maoism and to be viewed internationally as China's legitimate regime. In Britain, the NCNA and the Chinese Mission had long provided consular aid to Hong Kong Chinese emigrants. Likewise, both agencies had a history of distributing propaganda and Hong Kong Leftist media material to audiences in Britain's Chinatowns. Both agencies sought to harness members of the British Left who had embraced Maoism in order to gain a propaganda victory in the eyes of the Chinese press. In 1966, both Chinese agencies

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 3.

sought to legitimize Mao's Cultural Revolution. They also came out in support of the 1967 Hong Kong Leftist Riots. Much of their propaganda denounced British colonial rule and even exposed the grievances of Hong Kong Chinese emigrants towards the British government. As a transnational entity, Chinese governmental agencies promoted patriotism and ethnic nationalism and drew together localized grievances to win over Britain's ethnic Chinese community in favour of the PRC state.

Eventually, the transnational political interventions of the PRC that helped ignite unrest in Britain's Chinatowns were countered by transnational manoeuvres by Britain and its Hong Kong colonial government. In response to the pro-Leftist sentiments in Britain's Chinatowns, the Hong Kong government instructed administrative officer David Lai to travel to Britain and conduct a survey of the Chinese community to find out how and why a society that had often been thought of as apolitical could support the Hong Kong Leftists. It was important for the British and Hong Kong governments to survey and enact policies to channel the transnational activities of the ethnic Chinese migrants to ensure political stability and ensure the continued flow of remittance to the New Territories. Lai's survey echoed much of the findings of Heung Yee Kuk after their 1968 goodwill tour: a combination of anti-Chinese prejudice in Britain, a lack of social welfare supports from both the host country and the colony, and the effectiveness of Maoist propaganda caused certain members of Britain's Chinatowns to show support for, or at the least sympathy with, Communist anti-colonial discourse. Both governments determined it necessary to radically transform their policy and commit to the needs of Britain's ethnic Chinese communities. As such, the case of the causes and new leaf commitment to the Chinese populace of Britain and Hong Kong by their respective governments demonstrates transnationalism "from the middle."

Thus, following Lai's 1968 survey of Britain's ethnic Chinatowns, the British and Hong Kong governments enacted a series of reforms that contrasted sharply with their previously indifferent attitude towards the ethnic Chinese emigrants. The HKGO received increased funding and staffing and expanded its operations beyond London. The HKGO offered consular care and pro-colonial news on Hong Kong as a means to meet the community's needs and to create an effective counter-propaganda campaign as an antidote to left-wing and pro-Maoist media. Above all, it was the British and Hong Kong government's efforts to preserve the Cantonese language and foster a pro-colony Hong Kong identity that emphasized the benefits of capitalism and security over the chaos of the Cultural Revolution that would have a lasting impact on Britain's ethnic Chinese community. In fact, this identity has outlived the Hong Kong colony itself. While the British certainly did not win over all the "hearts and minds" of the Chinese, they nonetheless were able to stem the Leftist unrest and address some of the pressing needs of its ethnic Chinese citizens.

The 1967 unrest in Britain's Chinatowns, and its aftermath is best understood by the examination of the role of three transnational grassroots movements, and the direct state interventions by the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong colonial government, and by Britain itself in a form of "transnationalism from the middle." All of these parties relied on transnational networks to advance their particular agendas and aims. The poor social, economic, and political conditions in Hong Kong, alongside a colonial government reluctant to address them, were equally matched by the discrimination, socio-economic dislocations, and state indifference experienced by ethnic Chinese emigrants in Britain. Fanned by years of neglect by the British, Beijing's growing importance on the international scene, and the growing radicalism

of Maoism, created the conditions that led some Hong Kong Chinese to express their frustrations.

The 1967 disturbances in Hong Kong and Britain's Chinatowns forced state administrators to refashion relations with the ethnic Chinese citizens in both the colony and the metropole. It was time to offer adequate service, leisure, language training, and Cantonese and Hong Kong specific cultural supports to neutralize any Maoist influence. While the relationship British authorities cultivated with Britain's Chinatowns was far from perfect, they nonetheless began to recognize the Chinese as an integral component of contemporary British society.⁴⁹² It took an array of transnational actors "from the middle" to actually improve the social, political, and class identity of the Hong Kong Chinese. Hong Kong Leftists, pro-Beijing associations, and even the Chinese Mission made clear the many social and political grievances Hong Kong Chinese faced in the colony and within British society. This, in turn, prompted the Heung Yee Kuk and the British and Hong Kong governments to work together to find a way to stem any further Communist influence and unrest in the British-Chinese community. The result was the general improvement of the quality of life among Britain's Chinese community throughout the 1970s and 1980s. To this day, the PRC has found it hard to replicate the success the British and Hong Kong governments had in the aftermath of the 1967 Leftist Riots in Britain's Chinatowns.

To conclude, the interventions following the 1967 Hong Kong Leftist Riots and the unrest in Britain's Chinatowns the following year, is an important example of the hybridity of transnationalism "from the middle" and how the impact of events overseas can reverberate across a diasporic group. At the height of the Cold War between Britain and the PRC, the Cultural Revolution spilled over into British Hong Kong in the form of the 1967 Leftist Riots.

⁴⁹² *Chinese Community in Britain: The Government Reply to the Second Report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1984-85, HC 101-I* (London: H.M.S.O., 1985).

While Hong Kong was an obvious choice for exporting Cultural Revolutionary values, the migrants who found employment in Britain's busy Chinese restaurants were also impacted by the events occurring in the Chinese mainland and the colony. By revealing how transnationalism operates "from the middle" we can better understand how diasporic identity groups have asserted agency in improving their conditions and, concomitantly, how top-down state and transnational actors respond and reshape the demands "from the middle" subject to geopolitical and ideological exigencies.

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